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**Education as a Missionary Tool: A Study in
Christian Missionary Education by English
Protestant Missionaries in India with Special
Reference to Cultural Change**

By

*Jonathan
Ingleby*
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**A thesis submitted to the Open University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies

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Abstract

In the long nineteenth century all the English Protestant missionary societies in India used education as a missionary tool. This study examines their reasons for doing so and their attempts to implement various educational strategies. It also examines the theological and educational ideas that they brought with them from England, and the continuing pressures exerted on them by their English supporters. The way in which the missionaries adjusted to their new context and their relationship with the government and with the local culture are also studied.

The thesis argues that missionary education had considerable impact on the culture in which it took place, but that it was not always the impact that the missionaries had intended. Similarly the culture affected the choices which the missionaries made. Missionary strategies changed as they experienced failure and success in achieving their aims.

Attention is paid to the political, as well as the cultural, context of the missionaries. While the missionaries' educational aims were to some extent formulated in dialogue with government, the study suggests that the missionaries and the government had significantly different educational strategies.

A clear cut distinction is drawn between the education aimed at the nation's elite through English medium higher education and the attempt to educate at a village level in the vernacular languages. The thesis argues that the latter was more successful in terms of the missionaries' long term aims.

Finally, the thesis also argues that 'raising up a native agency' was the missionaries' initial purpose in founding schools and colleges. For a number of reasons they were often diverted from this aim in the intervening years. It became their strategy again, however, at the end of the period.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study centres on the educational work and attitudes of English Protestant missionaries in India during the long nineteenth century,¹ and especially those of the BMS, SPG, CMS and Cambridge Mission to Delhi. Other mission agencies made important contributions to education during this period. The Scottish missionaries, for example, had a profound influence on educational mission in India. Reference will be made to them from time to time. However the study is chiefly concerned with English Protestant missions. The Scots have been the centre of the debate for some while and there has been recent extensive work on Alexander Duff and the Scottish Enlightenment (see references below).² For this reason there is a strong case for balancing this evidence with the work of the Baptists and the Church of England. Their work was begun earlier than that of the Scots and originally had a different emphasis. It is this emphasis, its loss and subsequent recovery, which contributes an important strand to the argument. The work of other missions, such as that of the LMS in South Travancore, has also been examined, but, like that of the Scots, is used mainly for comparison and contrast.

¹ This term, referring to the years 1789-1914, I owe to Eric Hobsbawm. See e.g. the note at the foot of p.6 in Eric Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes, (London, 1994).

² Michael Laird comments on Duff's ability 'to occupy the centre of every stage after 1830'. See M.A.Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1837 (Oxford, 1972) p. 260.

This selectivity has made it possible to look at the work of the Baptists at Serampore and their educational strategy, Bishop's College in Calcutta and the SPG schools developed under its aegis, the CMS and its relationship to government after the Mutiny, the SPG and its vernacular schools in Tamil Nadu, and finally the work of the Cambridge Mission at Delhi, particularly at St Stephen's College. This 'spread' of evidence has been used to ask a number of questions about the aims of missionary education. For example, were the missionaries chiefly concerned with using their schools and colleges to train up local assistants, or were they seen as outposts for evangelism? Were Christian schools and colleges intended to 'diffuse' Christian knowledge through the nation at large, or intended specifically to raise the educational standards of the growing Christian community? Was there a development in missionary thinking about the philosophy of education, and if so in what direction? Thus, the Baptists and the SPG began with a primary interest in the education of a 'native agency'. Were they, perhaps, diverted from this task into broader aims? Again, by the mid nineteenth century missionary education had become part of a more general provision of education for India with a less focused purpose. What did this mean in terms of the missionaries' relationship with government, which was also increasingly interested in providing education for the nation at large? Given that the 1813 Charter Act spoke of the introduction of 'useful knowledge' as a government responsibility and also that public funds were specifically committed to English education after Macaulay's famous minute in 1835, where did the missionaries' schools and colleges fit in?

No stage in the educational process - from primary through to college education – has been excluded from this study. The great difference between primary and higher (tertiary) education was that, after the 1830s, the medium of education for higher education was usually English, while primary education remained in the vernacular. The choice of language varied for secondary education, though much of that too was in English. Many missions tried to establish a complete system of education, so that students who joined in the primary school could, if they had the ability, go right through to degree level or equivalent within the mission set-up. In trying to ascertain educational aims, it is therefore better to look at educational provision as a whole rather than trying to divide it up by means of different age groups.

Chronologically the study is divided into two parts. The mid fifties, with the Wood Despatch in 1854 and the Indian Mutiny in 1857, provide a watershed in the history of India and Indian education. Up to 1857, missionary education was still, in some respects, in its 'revolutionary' phase. After 1857 the issues were those of a more settled and developed approach. The work of the Baptists at Serampore and the SPG at Bishop's College (considered in the first part of this thesis) were essentially pioneer enterprises, and therefore had a number of similarities. The work of the SPG in Tamil Nadu and the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, considered in the second part, also had much in common, despite their very different contexts. They were both examples of missionary education as a provision for the populace at large (i.e. not specifically for Christians, or for training church personnel). The village schools of Tamil Nadu and St Stephen's College in Delhi both had a 'civilising' purpose.

The study also has a *geographical* spread. Calcutta and Bengal provide the initial focus. The study begins there with the Baptists (who kept in close contact with events in Calcutta from their base in the Danish enclave at Serampore) and Bishop's College in the suburbs of the city itself. The second part of the study begins with evidence from south India, particularly the city of Madras and southern Tamil Nadu, and ends with the Cambridge Mission to Delhi in the north. To round off the picture evidence is considered from Bombay in the west. The work in Bombay was largely carried out by the Church of Scotland mission, but, as will be demonstrated, John Wilson and his colleagues were often more in sympathy with the spirit and method of the English missionaries than that of Alexander Duff and the Church of Scotland mission in Calcutta.

On the whole this study does not suggest that there were substantial regional differences in terms of missionary attitudes. For example, all-India missionary conferences showed a surprising unanimity when dealing with educational topics. Even more surprisingly, considering the fierceness of the debate between the churches over education in Britain, there do not seem to have been very great denominational differences either. Theological differences, however, were behind some of the difficulties experienced by Bishop's College in Calcutta in their relationship with other Church of England agencies in that city. Also it will be argued that the Vernacularist-Anglicist debate, in which the missionaries took different sides, stemmed from theological differences. Later on, the diffusion theory of education was partly based on a change in attitude to Hinduism which in turn had a theological root. Again, this will be demonstrated

during the course of the study. Despite this there was, on the whole, considerable unity of purpose. It may be that the missionary enterprise, and the sense of being a beleaguered minority, united Christian opinion. On the debit side, while the missionaries may have found common cause 'on the field' they were often at odds with their home committees and supporters, as this study will reveal.

To some extent the missionaries give the impression of working in a vacuum, remaining very much within their own Christian sub culture. This is an illusion. Like every other group moving from one culture to another, they brought their own history and culture with them and were then forced to interact with their new context. There is plenty of evidence that the educational ideas held by the missionaries had their origin in English society, but also that they were modified by the needs and pressures of their ministry in India. There was never any real possibility of their dissociating themselves from the wider world of politics, economics and society, once in India, even if they had wished to do so. For example, the decision by the government to use English as the medium of higher education, had huge consequences for missionary education. Events as various as the Charter Act of 1813, the Indian Mutiny, and the rise of Indian nationalism were deeply significant for the missionaries and their work. Further, the missionaries acted on the wider world as well as being influenced by it. Examples of missionary influence can be seen in the Wood Despatch or in the rise to prominence (in south Tamil Nadu) of groups such as the Nadars who were given new opportunities to prosper through education.

The chief concern of this study is 'to listen to the missionaries'. When considered as historical documents many missionary letters and reports display a narrow concern with religious and ecclesiastical affairs which makes it difficult for a researcher to enter into the missionaries' real context. The older style missionary biographies often suffer from the same fault. Furthermore many of these sources were produced for a very specific audience, for the eyes of mission executives and home board committee members, and the Christian public in Britain. Very often it is necessary to 'read between the lines', in fact to do some fashionable deconstruction. Yet there is a danger which attends all deconstructive techniques. It is the danger of ceasing to listen to the missionaries at all. 'Seeing through' them results in their not being seen at all.

Marxist and nationalist historians, for example, have tended to place the history of mission under the heading of the history of imperialism.³ Whatever the text might say, the sub-text was the pursuit of a conscious or unconscious imperialism. Yet this can draw a distorting picture. First of all, in many cases the missionaries had an agenda, which was largely concerned with religious and ecclesiastical goals, but which was a real agenda in the sense that it was genuinely what they had come to India to do. It might be briefly summarised as raising up an Indian Christian church. The missionary 'voice' is primarily a witness to this task. It was a task which progressively mitigated their isolation and which connected them with their context, through their educational

³ See for example, K.M.Pannikar, Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498-1945 (London, 1959); Bipan Chandra, India's Struggle for Independence (New Delhi, 1988). See also works listed in the review of previous studies below.

programmes, translation work, medical work, itinerate preaching and pastoral commitment. Secondly, in pursuing this goal, they were often prepared to contest the ground with the powerful political and social forces that were arrayed against them. Missionary studies should in fact be treated, in many instances, as an example of 'Subaltern Studies'. It is possible to 'deconstruct' a history of the times which suggests that the only the rich and the powerful are the makers of history, and that the consciousness of every subordinate group can only be defined in terms of these other groups. But this means that the missionaries, too, must be allowed to make their own history, and not just the missionaries, but the Indian church that they struggled to bring into being. Of course this raises the question of degrees of power. Did the missionaries and Indian Christians exercise enough influence for them to be significant contestants in the educational arena? This is one of the issues that this study examines.

The missionaries' approach can, of course, be criticised from a variety of angles. The thesis will argue that their most serious failing was allowing themselves in many instances to be diverted from the task of raising up an Indian Christian church. This can certainly be illustrated in the field of education. The fruitful strategy of training up Indian church leaders largely through vernacular education and specific training institutions (Bishop's College, Serampore College) was abandoned for a ministry among the upper classes, which included English medium education, cultural imperialism, and a role as ally to Government in supplying English speakers for the civil service. Nationalist historians who have bracketed missionary activity under the heading of

imperialism may find some evidence here, but it can be demonstrated that it is evidence primarily of the way that missionary education was at times diverted away from its own best intentions. The reasons for this will be discussed in detail in this study.⁴

A review of previous studies

1. The archival material available for this study has been described above. There is certainly a trend in contemporary scholarship to utilise missionary archives more fully than in the past. This has been aided by the workshop on missionary archives at the School of Asian and African Studies in 1992, for which A Preliminary Guide to the Archives of British Missionary Societies (1992) was compiled by Rosemary Seton and Emily Naish.⁵ More recently a volume of essays entitled Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues (1996), and edited by Robert Bickers and Rosemary Seton,⁶ has made available many of the papers read at the workshop. The volume contains a vigorous apologetic for 'missionary history' as derived from mission archives.

2. The Bengal Renaissance and the influence of Western ideas in India remain an important background to the early days of missionary education. There are a

⁴ See below e.g. pp. 72-6 and 458-60.

⁵ R.Seton and E.Naish, compilers, A Preliminary Guide to the Archives of British Missionary Societies (London, 1992).

⁶ R.Bickers and R.Seton, editors, Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues (Richmond, 1996).

number of 'classics' in this field such as David Kopf's British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance (1979)⁷, L.S.S.O'Malley's Modern India and the West: a Study of the Interactions of their Civilisations (1969)⁸, Eric Stokes's The English Utilitarians and India (1959)⁹ and the essays in Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation (1976) edited by C.H.Philips and M.D.Wainwright.¹⁰ More recent studies are C.A.Bayly's Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (1988)¹¹ and K.W.Jones's, Social and Religious Reform Movements in British India, (1989)¹² All of these tackle the much disputed question of 'Westernisation'; to what extent was it a reality, how did it take place, if it did, and what were the consequences? Other works have widened the debate and looked at a greater spread of Indian contexts. Examples are Judith Brown's Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy (1985)¹³, Thomas Metcalfe's Ideologies of the Raj (1995),¹⁴ and Partha Chatterjee's The

⁷ D.Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: the Dynamics of Indian Modernisation 1773-1835 (Berkeley and L.A., 1979).

⁸ L.S.S.O'Malley, editor, Modern India and the West: a Study of the Interactions of their Civilisations (Bombay, 1969).

⁹ E.Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford, 1959).

¹⁰ C.H.Philips and M.D.Wainwright, editors, Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation c. 1830-1850 (London, 1976).

¹¹ C.A.Bayly, Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1988).

¹² K.W.Jones, Social and Religious Reform Movements in British India, (Cambridge, 1989).

¹³ J.Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy Second edition (Oxford, 1994).

¹⁴ T.R.Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj (Cambridge, 1995).

Nation and its Fragments (1993)¹⁵ which, while drawing its evidence mainly from Bengal deals with India-wide issues of cultural identity. Much recent study has been written from a more self-consciously anti-imperialist stance. This is true of Ashis Nandy's The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonisation (1983)¹⁶, Gauri Viswanathan's The Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India (1989)¹⁷ and Edward Said's Culture and Imperialism (1993)¹⁸. Said's book is a further contribution to the subject of 'orientalism' as defined by Said in his book of that name,¹⁹ and this discussion has been related to the theme of this study at the appropriate place. Susan Bayly's , Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society (1700-1900) (1989)²⁰ is anti-imperialist in the sense that it claims that the colonial government in south India initiated few changes and misunderstood those that it did. It also deals with the important themes of conversion and social 'uplift' which continues a long debate going back to J.W.Pickett's classic on the 'mass movements'.²¹ Other more recent contributions on this theme include Dick Kooiman's study of the LMS in South

¹⁵ Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments (New Jersey, 1993).

¹⁶ A.Nandy, The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonization (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1983).

¹⁷ G.Viswanathan, The Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India (Columbia University, 1989).

¹⁸ E.Said, Culture and Imperialism (London, 1993).

¹⁹ E. Said, Orientalism (New York, 1978).

²⁰ Susan Bayly, Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society (1700-1900) (Cambridge, 1989).

²¹ J.W.Pickett, Christian Mass Movements in India (New York, 1933).

Travancore (1989)²², Susan Billington-Harper's thesis on V.S.Azariah (1991)²³, John Webster's book on Dalit Christianity (1992)²⁴ and Samuel Jayakumar's work on the Nadars (1998)²⁵. To these can be added the evidence from Western India given in Rosalind O'Hanlon's Caste, Conflict and Ideology (1985).²⁶ The majority of these stress the positive contribution missionary work has made to social amelioration. Clive Whitehead has specifically repudiated the idea that missionary education was simply a cover for British imperialism.²⁷ This whole area of investigation has been deeply influenced by the Subaltern Studies series, particularly by the early programmatic work of S.Guha.²⁸ As a comment on this, R.O'Hanlon's article 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and

²² D.Kooiman, Conversion and Social Equality in India: The London Missionary Society in South Travancore in the 19th Century (Amsterdam, 1989).

²³ S.Billington-Harper, Azariah and Indian Christianity during the Late Years of the Raj (Unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1991).

²⁴ J.C.B.Webster, A History of the Dalit Christians in India (San Francisco, 1992).

²⁵ Samuel Jayakumar, A Critical and Comparative Study of the Relationship Between Missionary Strategy, Dalit Consciousness and Socio-economic Transformation in the Missionary Work by SPG among the Nadar and Paraya Communities of Tirunelveli District between 1830 and 1930 (Unpublished PhD.thesis, Open University, 1998).

²⁶ R.O'Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985).

²⁷ C.Whitehead, 'British Colonial Education Policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?' in J.A.Mangan, ed., 'Benefits Bestowed?' Education and British Imperialism (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988).

²⁸ See e.g. R.Guha, editor, Subaltern Studies 1 (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982).

Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia'(1988)²⁹ is important. Many of these studies look at the onset of Westernisation and the subsequent efforts of the British to 'educate India', from the government's point of view. This present study looks at these themes from a missionary point of view, and from a wider perspective than Michael Laird's well known survey of missionary education (mentioned below) which is confined to Bengal and the period up to 1837.

3. There continues to be a great deal of interest shown in the influence of the Enlightenment on missionary thought in India, and in particular in Alexander Duff and his background in the Scottish Enlightenment. I.D.Maxwell's unpublished thesis, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta to 1840' (1995) ³⁰ is an example. Several of the recent Position Papers of the North Atlantic Missiology Project deal with this theme. In the history of the early years of missionary education in India Duff seems to act as a magnet to scholars and this study attempts to resist over emphasising Duff's work. This is because Duff's contribution needs to be balanced with the other missionary educators. The educational work of the Baptists and particularly of the SPG through Bishop's College and its schools, has not been given the same thorough consideration. A start on this is attempted here.

²⁹ R.O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject: Subaltern Studies and Histories of Resistance in Colonial South Asia' in Modern Asian Studies, 22, 1, 1988.

³⁰ I.D.Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta to 1840' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1995).

4. The history of Christianity in India largely remains to be written. It is hoped that this study will contribute in a small way to this. An initial overall survey has been undertaken by Stephen Neill in his two volume work, A History of Christianity in India (1985) ³¹, but detailed studies are lacking. The histories of the various missions at work in India provide some useful evidence though there is not much recent scholarship in this field except for Brian Stanley's The History of the Baptist Missionary Society (1992) ³². The projected series of volumes under the auspices of the Church History Association of India promises a fuller account, but is nowhere near completion. The study of the history of the church in Tamilnadu by Hugald Grafe, however, relates to our period.³³ In the area of missionary education Michael Laird's Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 (1972) ³⁴ remains an important source for the early period of missionary activity. There is nothing comparable for the period after 1837. Avril Powell has contributed a valuable study on the interaction of Christians and Muslims, also in the pre-Mutiny period.³⁵ The development of missionary thought, particularly in its relationship to non-Christian religions is explored by Eric Sharpe in Not to Destroy but to Fulfil (1965) ³⁶, by M.Zechariah

³¹ S.Neill, A History of Christianity in India, 2 volumes (Cambridge, 1985).

³² B.Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992 (Edinburgh, 1992).

³³ H.Grafe, History of Christianity in India (IV/2): Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Bangalore, 1990).

³⁴ M.Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 (Oxford, 1972).

³⁵ A.Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India (Richmond, 1993).

³⁶ E.Sharpe, Not To Destroy But to Fulfil (Uppsala, 1963).

in Christian Education and Cultural Transformation in India (1981)³⁷, and more recently by Kenneth Cracknell in Justice, Courtesy and Love (1995).³⁸

This thesis will demonstrate that there is a link between changes in the missionaries' theological outlook and their educational policy.

5. Some recent work has also been done on the relationship of the missionary enterprise to imperialism, the government of India, and to the rise of Indian nationalism. G.Thomas's Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism (1979)³⁹ looks at this theme, as does G.Studdert Kennedy's British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj (1991)⁴⁰, a study in Christian imperialism.

D.O'Connor's Gospel, Raj and Swaraj (1990)⁴¹ has particularly to do with C.F.Andrews and his conversion to the cause of Indian nationalism. The archival material relating to the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, referred to extensively in this thesis, throws new light on this subject. The 'idealistic imperialism' of the Cambridge missionaries such as Lefroy and Allnutt was a substantially different approach, typical neither of the imperialistic ideologies of

³⁷ M.Zechariah, Christian Education and Cultural Transformation in India (Madras, 1981).

³⁸ K.Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love, Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914 (London, 1995).

³⁹ G.Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism (Frankfurt, 1979).

⁴⁰ G.Studdert Kennedy, British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj (Delhi, 1991).

⁴¹ D,O'Connor, Gospel, Raj and Swaraj: The Missionary Years of C.F.Andrews 1904-14 (Frankfurt, 1990).

the Raj, nor of the approach of a missionary like C.F.Andrews who moved decisively to a pro-nationalist position.

6. The relationship between the missionaries and their home constituencies has also drawn increasing attention. S. Piggin's Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858: The Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India (1984) ⁴² is a fairly recent contribution. Less specific but valuable in its description of the society from which the missionaries emerged is Boyd Hilton's The Age of Atonement, The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865 (1988) ⁴³. Some material remains unpublished, for example S.C.Potter's 'The Social Origins and Recruitment of English Protestant Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century' (1974) ⁴⁴, Brian Stanley's 'Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England c. 1838-73' (1979)⁴⁵, and P.Carson's, "Soldiers of Christ", Evangelicals and India 1780-1833'(1988)⁴⁶ . This study takes into account the missionaries' home

⁴² S.Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858: The Social Background, Motives and Training of British Protestant Missionaries to India (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984).

⁴³ B.Hilton, The Age of Atonement, The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865 (Oxford, 1988).

⁴⁴ S.C.Potter, 'The Social origins and Recruitment of English protestant Missionaries in the Nineteenth Century' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1974).

⁴⁵ B.Stanley, 'Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England, c. 1838-73' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979).

⁴⁶ P.Carson, "Soldiers of Christ", Evangelicals and India 1784-1833 (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of London, 1988).

background, and the pressures under which the missionaries found themselves in responding to their home constituencies. In particular it looks at the way educational policy was shaped by these constraints. In general, while the fate of Christianity in Victorian Britain has received a great deal of attention, the importance of mission to the Victorian church often gets scant attention.

This study investigates the way English missionaries in India in the nineteenth century used education as a missionary method and the rationales they gave for this methodology. The background to this study is the relationship of the missionary movement to British educational policy in India, the cultural impact of the British on India, and to a lesser extent the movement for Indian independence; also the missionaries' home constituency, in terms of both national and ecclesiastical politics. As indicated above, the study draws on work done in all of these fields. Nevertheless the original work incorporated in this thesis has to do with the missionaries' educational aims, and the documents have been interrogated primarily from that standpoint. In order to reach its conclusions the study looks at the work of a number of missions, active in a number of differing 'fields'. The period chosen includes the beginnings of missionary educational work in India up to the point where the missionaries were beginning to think seriously about handing over their mandate to the Indian church. No other study, to the author's knowledge, examines the various rationales for educational work for such a range of missions, in such detail and over such a spread of time. In an attempt to explain the way these rationales develop, they have been put in the wider context of 'missionary history', the study of the process whereby the Western

Christian tradition became part of the experience of non-Western nations.⁴⁷ This process has in turn been set in the wider political, religious and social context of the long nineteenth century.

The focus of the study is provided by a straightforward question. Given that the overall aim of the missionary enterprise was 'the conversion of India', why was education considered to be so important a strategy? As the study reveals, some saw education as a means of raising up an indigenous church and training its leadership; others had a more grandiose idea – the Christianising of India by means of direct influence on the influential classes. This thesis argues that the former was in the long term a productive strategy and the latter considerably less so. Also, it is an extension of this thesis that the missionaries were in many instances diverted from the first into the second.⁴⁸ These conclusions have not, it is believed, been so clearly demonstrated before. They contribute in an original way to our thinking about the way missionary education was done and how it fitted into the overall missionary strategy in India (with possible relevance for mission strategy elsewhere and at other times.)

⁴⁷ See e.g., Brian Stanley: 'Writing the missionary history of the last two centuries presents the challenge of interpreting aspects of one of the most significant trends in the entire history of the Christian church - the process whereby a Christian tradition rooted in the West expanded to the non-Western world, became indigenised there, and ultimately acquired such independent vitality that the very centre of gravity of global Christianity has been shifted to the southern hemisphere.' B. Stanley, 'Some Problems in Writing a Missionary Society History Today' in R.A. Bickers & R. Seton, Missionary Encounters p. 48.

⁴⁸ I draw out these points at the end of this study. See pp. 458-60.

The choice of strategies and the reasons for the way they changed and developed can be best explained by the missionaries' own background in their countries of origin and also the Indian context they subsequently encountered. In the next chapter this historical context, both in Britain and in India, will be considered.

Chapter 2: Historical Introduction

The early days of the missionary movement in Britain

In determining their overall missionary strategies, including their educational ones, the British educational missionaries naturally expressed the attitudes of their home constituency. These attitudes changed as they experienced life in India, as we shall see, but the missionaries were always involved in the politics of their home countries as well as their mission 'fields'. To understand them and their educational policies we need to be aware of the way that missionary and church politics were developing in Britain.

In terms of political empowerment the key moment for the missionary movement was the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company in 1813. At that time, in contrast to the failure of the 'pious clauses' on the occasion of the previous renewal of the Charter in 1793, the door to missionary activity in India was set ajar ¹ and the government avowed a specific interest in education. The key resolution was:

Resolved that it is the duty of this country to promote the interest and happiness of the native inhabitants of the British dominion in India, and that such measures ought to be adopted, as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral

¹ Penny Carson has shown that there was still considerable opposition after 1813 from the East India Company and even some within the Church of England. See below chapter 6, pp.179-80.

improvement. That, in the furtherance of the above objects, sufficient facilities should be afforded by law, to persons desirous of going to, and remaining in India for the purpose of accomplishing those benevolent designs.' ²

This was a qualified triumph for the missionary movement in Britain and it was able to take advantage of it. In 1813 there were 36 missionaries at work in India. By 1830 there were 130 missionaries from 8 societies.³ This success was achieved not in India but in Britain. It was the outcome of a considerable change of public attitude in Britain - from Orientalist to Evangelical and Utilitarian - and which affected India rather later than Britain. In Britain, as Allan Davidson has shown, by 1800 attitudes towards India were already being significantly influenced by missionary propaganda rather than by Orientalists. This became increasingly the case as the nineteenth century proceeded.⁴ In general G.D.Bearce suggests (in his study British Attitudes to India) that in arriving at their attitudes towards India, both public and private, the British relied principally on prejudices, experience, and thought derived from their own British context, rather than a knowledge of India or standards derived from Indian experience.⁵

² Parliamentary Debates XXVI (1813) p. 562-3 cited by A.K.Davidson, 'The Development and Influence of the British Missionary Movement's Attitudes Towards India, 1786-1830' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1973) p. 295.

³ Davidson, 'The Development and Influence...' Appendix 1.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 121.

⁵ G.D.Bearce, British Attitudes to India 1784-1958 (Oxford, 1961) p. 299.

These new attitudes were expressed by both Evangelicals and Utilitarians. Their chief emphasis was the weakness and depravity of Indian society, the need for government intervention as a Christianising and civilising measure, and the political, as well as social, benefits that would accrue if this intervention took place. Charles Grant, the prominent Evangelical, who was elected a Director of the East India Company in 1797 and for nearly thirty years remained influential in Indian affairs ⁶, exemplified this thinking. In his 'Observations', ⁷ having described at great length the faults of Hindu society, he then promised that he would proceed to 'an inquiry into the means of remedying disorders' ⁸ arguing that the government should encourage schools in which English should be the language of instruction. He believed that education was the key - Christian education of course - especially if that meant knowledge of the Christian Scriptures.⁹ 'By planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions, and our religion, in our Asiatic territories, we shall put a great work beyond the

⁶ Davidson, 'The Development and Influence...' p. 55. The influence of Charles Grant has been described in some detail in V.Mangalwadi, India: The Grand Experiment (Farnham, 1997). Mangalwadi's thesis is that in virtually every important sphere – social norms, education, the economy, the press and government itself - Grant and his fellow evangelicals had a crucial influence on the development of India. Though his case is perhaps overstated it is a useful corrective to the point of view that either ignores or belittles the contribution of the evangelical statesmen, chaplains and missionaries.

⁷ The full title of Grant's work is Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals and on the Means of Improving it. Written chiefly in the Year 1792.

⁸ Davidson 'The Development and Influence...' p. 59.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 52.

reach of contingencies.’¹⁰

In similar vein, in urging a specialist education for young civil servants on their first arrival in India, Claudius Buchanan, another prominent Evangelical, argued that only through Christianity could true civilisation be imparted. In his view the military successes that Britain had lately gained against the French were victories over infidelity. Britain was like ‘the Guardian Angel of the Christian world’.¹¹ Britain’s Christian stance was not incidental but at the heart of her greatness, assuring her a prominent place among the nations. Further, ‘the importance we are daily acquiring in the eye of the world and the destructive effects of irreligion in other countries, make it proper that we should shew that we yet profess the faith of our country, and that we are yet accounted a Christian community.’¹² In other words, as Linda Colley has pointed out, Britain’s identity was essentially a religious identity, specifically a Protestant Christian one, and this was the cause of her greatness. It was also a call to exercise responsibility.

For most Victorians, the massive overseas empire which was the fruit of so much successful warfare represented final and conclusive proof of Great Britain’s providential destiny. God had entrusted Britons with

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 53. The reference to Charles Grant’s contribution is: Parliamentary Papers (1831-2) VIII, 1-92.

¹¹ C. Buchanan, A Sermon Preached at the New Church of Calcutta (Calcutta, 1800) p. 19.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 25.

empire, they believed, so as to further the worldwide spread of the Gospel and as a testimony to their status as the Protestant Israel.¹³

Buchanan's immediate answer was education and he continued to exercise considerable influence on opinion through his pivotal role in the newly established Fort William College and through the Buchanan prizes. Buchanan received Wellesley's permission to offer to the seven universities of Britain and to four public schools, prizes for an essay competition. The most important essay subject was: 'On the best means of civilising the subjects of the British Empire in India; and of diffusing the light of the Christian religion throughout the Eastern world.'¹⁴ Significantly for our study, there was a specifically missiological emphasis in the prize essays. Also in all of them one of the most important means of propagating Christianity was said to be education.¹⁵ Certainly, education and the translation of the Bible far outranked in importance traditional missionary methods such as preaching. One of the published prize essays suggested a seminary in India itself for training missionaries 'whence, as from Iona, the rays of Christian light might proceed to illumine and cheer benighted regions around it.'¹⁶

¹³ Linda Colley, Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837 (London, 1992) pp.368-9.

¹⁴ There is a detailed analysis of the Buchanan prizes in Davidson 'The Development and Influence...' pp.131-58.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 147.

¹⁶ H.Pearson, A Dissertation on the Propagation of Christianity in Asia (Oxford, 1808) p. 174.

As Percival Spear has pointed out, these Evangelical attitudes to India were well established before the missionary movement, as such, had made much progress. They can be seen in the Simeonite group of chaplains headed by David Brown and Henry Martyn and the laymen Charles Grant, George Udney and Sir John Shore. All of these believed that Britain had a civilising mission in India to be achieved by replacing the values of Indian society by British ones.

Just as national politics were creating a climate sympathetic to mission, so church politics followed suit. The modern missionary enterprise as a whole in Scotland is associated with the celebrated debate between the Evangelicals and the Moderates over missionary methods. While this debate was central to the beginnings of Scottish missions it had elements that were to form part of the more general discussion about mission methods. Indeed, if we focus on India, there is ample evidence that in the area of educational missions Scottish thinking was highly influential in the formation of missionary educational policies more generally. In brief, the debate was not about the missionary ideal itself but the methods to be employed. The Moderate party held that civilisation had to precede evangelisation while the Evangelical party argued that the spread of Christianity was the way that civilisation came. In the opening discussion the Moderates won the day and after the initial exchange in 1796, mission was temporarily deleted from the General Assembly's agenda.¹⁷ However, as Ian Maxwell has shown, it was not the policy of the Moderates to

¹⁷ R.Heron, Account of the proceedings and debate, in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 27 May, 1796 (Edinburgh, 1796) p. 34.

forget about missions.¹⁸ Their stance was that the right time must be awaited and it was a sign of changing times that in 1824 the General Assembly appointed a 'Committee on the propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen' under the convenorship of John Inglis.¹⁹ Inglis was a leading Moderate as was James Bryce, the Church of Scotland chaplain in Calcutta and Inglis's informant on Indian affairs. When consideration was given to the means of implementation they chose to establish schools in India. They believed that they had evidence that Indians were especially eager to gain education, and in particular to learn English. In other words the process of 'civilising' had begun. Establishing schools and colleges would carry this forward. In the committee's view, therefore 'Of all the auxiliary means, that we can imagine of preparing their minds for the faith of the Gospel, and of permanently establishing the Redeemer's Kingdom in the Eastern world, this appears to be the most likely to prove efficient.'²⁰ The implications of this approach were profound and are dealt with at length in chapter 3. The first missionary sent by the Committee was Alexander Duff who became famous for the notable impact he made on education in Calcutta.²¹

¹⁸ See below chapter 3 and on the specific issue of timing , I.Maxwell, Civilisation or Christianity: The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750-1835 (North Atlantic Missionary Project, Position paper Number 12, pp.11-13.)

¹⁹ Acts of the General Assembly, 1824, p. 41.

²⁰ 'To the people of Scotland, the letter of a committee of the General Assembly of the Church relative to the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, and, more immediately, in the British provinces of India' (Edinburgh 1826) Appendix n.p. Cited by I.Davidson, 'The Development and Influence...' p. 324.

²¹ Duff opened his first school, then called the Chitpore Road School, in 1830. He gives an account of these events in his book India and Indian Missions.

In England the church politics were different but they also had a bearing on the missionary movement. For example the struggle to break the monopoly of the SPCK, an Anglican society, in India and therefore to gain access for dissenting missionary societies, was part of the campaign in Britain for religious freedom. The Dissenters had been prominent in missionary work almost from the beginning - Carey reached India in 1793 - though in an unofficial or even illegal role - and attitudes of rivalry carried over from Britain. The revolutionary ferment in England, real or imagined, beginning with the response to the French Revolution was a factor in the thinking of government into the next century right up to the 1850s. The Church of England considered itself very much under threat as a result. It may have been correct in this. A number of measures - the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act in 1828, the grant of Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the reform of Parliament in 1832, just to mention a selection - put the Established Church on the defensive. Notoriously it was the Irish Church Temporalities Bill in 1833 which prompted John Keble's sermon on 'National Apostasy' and the onset of the Oxford Movement.

Within the Church of England itself, the old High Church party, under threat from both the Evangelicals and, after 1833, from the Oxford Movement, was

Apparently he had little difficulty attracting students. There were five on the first day, twenty more the next, and eighty the next. By the end of the first week the school was full (A. Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1839) pp. 525-6). Duff seems to have been a little carried away with this enthusiastic response. He contrasts, in his account, the days when Christian missionaries could scarcely get a hearing, to the way that he was forced to turn away many would-be scholars (ibid., p. 530). Those enrolled, about 250, were mostly Hindus, about a quarter being Brahmins and the remainder all of the higher castes (ibid., p.534).

concerned about its waning strength. The first Bishop of Calcutta, Thomas Middleton, belonged to the High Church party and, according to A.K.Davidson, 'had great difficulty in working with anyone who did not conform to his understanding of Churchmanship, whether they were Evangelical chaplains, CMS missionaries, Baptists or Presbyterians.'²² Middleton was chiefly concerned with the Anglican High Church establishment, but he was prepared to be involved in missionary work with like-minded Anglicans if only because he feared that an open field was being left to rival groups. The idea of more vigorous missionary activity but through the structures and societies of the established church, was taken up in England by Joshua Watson, the leader of the Hackney Phalanx (the High Church party's equivalent to the Evangelical Clapham Sect). Watson's chosen implement was the SPG, who promptly put £5,000 at Middleton's disposal and arranged for a special collection in the churches. Middleton responded with his 'plan for the promoting of the Christian instruction of India, by the establishment of a Mission College in the vicinity of Calcutta'.²³ It was thus that Middleton became the founder of Bishop's College in Calcutta.²⁴

²² Davidson, 'The Development and Influence...' p. 319.

²³ See Missionary Register, 1819 p. 311. Cited by Davidson 'The Development and Influence...' p. 320.

²⁴ It is only fair to say that a more sympathetic account of these events has been given by Kenneth Hylson-Smith. Of the Hackney Phalanx, Hylson-Smith has written that they were animated by 'passion for the preservation of existing authority at a time when such authority was under severe threat, in an age of iconoclasm, and with pressures for reform or revolution in all and every aspect of national life.' Hylson-Smith also reckons that in the areas of education and mission the various parties of the Church of England sometimes made common cause. For example the idea of opening up mission to India achieved in 1813,

The Indian scene

Inevitably the British educational missionaries who arrived in India in the early nineteenth century brought with them the agendas already formulated in their home countries. They were also entering a world which was already experiencing the impact of the West in a variety of ways. It was a process that many Westerners felt would bring about decisive changes. They believed that Hinduism would be replaced by Christianity, an unjust social system would give way to just laws, and technological backwardness would be replaced by scientific progress.²⁵ There is no doubt that Western culture did indeed make a significant impact. Indian society in its present form has been deeply influenced by Western imperialism, its institutions bearing the unmistakable stamp of Western political and economic life. Though initially change took place only in small geographical areas (i.e. where British influence was greatest, and amongst relatively small groups, especially an educated elite in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and their immediate surroundings) that did not make it insignificant. It can be shown that the future agenda of the nation - nationalism, a united India (but also Muslim separatism), a revived Hindu tradition, democracy, social reform, acceptance of modern science and technology, an Indo-Anglian literary

though largely the work of Evangelicals like Wilberforce, was supported by the High Church party. See K. Hylson-Smith, High Churchmanship in the Church of England (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1993) pp. 102, 118-20.

²⁵ J. Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars (Cambridge, 1983) p. 136.

tradition ²⁶ - was being set by this process. This long list needs to be balanced, of course, with the warning that historians too quickly look for key moments and dramatic changes, and ignore the longer and deeper trends in society.²⁷ We need also to remember that Western influences were assimilated and transmuted by the Indian context; what looked familiar to Westerners was often quite different in practice. Even since Independence, as Paul Brass has demonstrated, the Western style democracy which may seem familiar to British and American observers is working on very different premises to those that govern politics in the West.²⁸ Nevertheless the world of education provided particularly powerful examples of cultural change, and it would be impossible to ignore them. Even the way that English has persisted as the language of the elite suggests that these changes have been ineradicable. Missionary work was part of this cultural impact. As C. A. Bayly has put it:

Well before the Christian 'Age of Reform' of the 1830s, when missionaries entered India and Ceylon more freely, Nazarene values were insidiously influencing the doctrines of empire in both East and West. In the past, many historians held that the failure of formal conversion in Asia proved that the missionary activity was irrelevant to social history. The position seems less convincing now. Even popular religious movements seem to have

²⁶ S.A.F.Ahmed, Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal, 1818-1835 (Leiden, 1965) p.200.

²⁷ J.Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy Second Edition, (Oxford, 1994) p. 33.

²⁸ P.Brass, The Politics of India Since Independence (Second Edition, Cambridge, 1995) *passim*.

responded to the Christian challenge, becoming more concerned with text and authority and organising themselves for direct proselytisation.' ²⁹

It should be noticed that Bayly is not saying that Hinduism was in decline. Indeed he states quite categorically that 'the proper context for the Christian and rationalistic impact of the early nineteenth century was...the vitality and not the decadence of Hindu (and Muslim) religion in India'.³⁰ The Indian theologian, M.M.Thomas, agrees with this verdict. 'Who can doubt the Gospel influence in the emergence within Hinduism of a sense of history, of the concepts of divine purpose, of the claims of social justice, or the development of the doctrine of karma into a purposeful, social concept as in Radhakrishnan?' ³¹

Certainly at no time did Western cultural values ever become dominant. The aim of many missionaries, for example, to destroy the Hindu cultural foundations of Indian life never looked remotely like succeeding. The early missionaries - and their successors - were deeply disconcerted by the tenacity of Hinduism. In 1830, to take just one of many possible examples, a Christian missionary at Puri was surprised and dismayed to see so many of the Calcutta 'learned and respectable' at

²⁹ C.A.Bayly, Imperial Meridian, the British Empire and the World 1780-1830 (London, 1989) pp. 46-7.

³⁰ C.A.Bayly, Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1988) p. 162.

³¹ M.M.Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (Madras, 1976).

the Jagannath festival ³², something particularly repugnant because of the festival's association with the occasional death of devotees. Further, there were many Westerners who came to India and found that, culturally speaking, they were themselves the captives rather than the captors. Much was said and written during the period of British rule in India about the decadence of Indian culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Modern scholars, as we have seen, tend to disagree.

The process itself has been analysed helpfully by Ashis Nandy who identifies various 'phases of Westernisation'.³³ The first two in particular concern our study. In the first phase, beginning at the end of the eighteenth century and roughly coinciding with the early days of the missionaries' educational enterprise, the universalist, Western educated, pro-British, reformist, Brahmanic literati - till then the main beneficiaries of the Raj - began their direct onslaught on Indian traditions. Their characteristic style, according to Nandy, might be summed up as 'an attempt to incorporate exogenous cultural elements on pragmatic and intellectual grounds, and then to justify this integration by appealing to traditional concepts of goodness'. This phase introduced several new themes: the relevance of the state to everyday life; Hinduism and Indianness as part of the Indian elite's self-identity; initiation of the debate on Hinduism and politics; the issue of the state as means of reform; the acceptance of textual Brahminism as a political force. Brahminism, so Nandy claimed, 'provided for the first time a basis for

³² K.M. Patra, Orissa Under the East India Company (Delhi, 1971) p.250.

³³ Ashis Nandy, At the Edge of Psychology (Delhi, 1990).

collective political identity. Predominantly integrationist and liberal, it was informed by a certain “positivist” universalism that made sense to a majority of the Indians participating in the public sphere, as well as to a large number of colonial rulers.’³⁴

The second phase - the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth - took more account of the feelings of the national and cultural inferiority which full-blown colonialism created. Indians in their discourse with Europeans tended to believe that as Hindus and Indians they were backward - economically, politically, morally. Hinduism was again the key, now (in the second phase) as an organised religion. In Nandy’s words, ‘The new mood was not to legitimise the extraneous, but revive the indigenous. They were seeking modern referents within the traditional culture itself. They were seeking parity, without breaking away from their own historical roots and without accepting the Utilitarian theory of progress.’³⁵

These are vital insights because they remind us of what ‘Westernisation’ meant to its Indian practitioners. It meant something very different to what it meant to the missionaries. If Nandy is right, in the second phase at least there was a turning away from ‘progress’, at least progress as expressed by Evangelical and Utilitarian Westernisation. Indians were turning away because, in terms of their own identity, this Westernisation did not give them sufficient dignity. If they continued to

³⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 57-8.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

'legitimise the extraneous' then the familiar world would disappear altogether. Rather they needed to 'revive the indigenous'. This was not necessarily obscurantism. They were seeking 'modern referents within the traditional culture.' Only thus could they attain 'parity'.

We must return, however, to Bengal and the context of the early educational missionaries. Those who were involved in Westernisation at that time have been helpfully placed ³⁶under the headings of three 'parties' - Orientalists, Anglicists and Vernacularists, though to describe each of these as a party dignifies them with a coherence which they did not in fact possess. It will be helpful nevertheless to examine these parties and the issues for which they felt they were standing. Initially Calcutta will be the focus. This is simply because Calcutta was where the impact of Westernisation was most fully felt and where the reactions to it were strongest. It was also the seat of government, and the attitude of government and the legislation it produced was by no means irrelevant.

Orientalists

One of the European preoccupations in the early nineteenth century in India, at least amongst the educated elite, was the value of India's past. (Not, it should be noted by contrast, interest in contemporary Indian culture. Most Europeans felt that this was an unworthy field of study.) Those who were particularly concerned

³⁶ For example by David Kopf. See D. Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: the Dynamics of Indian Modernisation 1773-1835 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

to study India's past and open up its treasures to their contemporaries were called Orientalists.³⁷ Ever since they appeared on the scene there has been continuing historical debate as to what impact this concern for India's past had on those who were planning its future. Were the Orientalists, as many felt at the time, simply obscurantists, romantically attached to the past and therefore opposed to 'progress'? Or were they indeed the way ahead, winning over Indian intellectuals to a degree of necessary change by clothing their vision with an acceptable sensitivity to the Indian cultural heritage?

Who were these Orientalists and what was their contribution to the 'debate on progress'? Three examples of influential Orientalists, William Jones, H.T.Colebrooke and H.H.Wilson provide us with insights into their thought. William Jones, the first president of the Asiatic Society was a typical product of the eighteenth century (he died in 1794). He was a universalist who believed, in a manner typical of many Enlightenment thinkers, that there was a common source of wisdom, and that the fruits of that wisdom were universally applicable. They were truths, he said, in his first Presidential address to the Asiatic Society, about 'Man and Nature'.³⁸ He used his powerful intellect to underline the common Indo-

³⁷ In recent years, particularly since the publication of E. Said, Orientalism (Pantheon Books, New York, 1978) the term 'Orientalism' has become an increasingly controversial one. Said, himself, helpfully distinguishes three possible uses of the term: (1.) the changing historical and cultural relationship between Europe and Asia (2) the scientific discipline in the west according to which, beginning in the early nineteenth century, one specialised in the study of various Oriental cultures and traditions (3) the ideological suppositions and images and fantasies about a currently important and politically urgent region of the world called the Orient. [See E.Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', in F.Barker (ed.), Literature, Politics and Theory (Methuen, 1986) p.211]. In this chapter I am using the term in the second sense.

European source of language and culture. This was very distant from those nineteenth century attitudes which tended to emphasise the superiority of Western culture over all the others. G. Cannon, Jones's biographer, attributes the following thinking to him: 'it was all, he reflected, so very simple, and yet so profitable for East and West alike; exchange material and cultural resources, while at the same time maintaining a deep respect for human rights'.³⁹ These may be the words of the biographer rather than his subject, but there was a clear agenda here: of exchange based on the assumption that at one stage there had been equality. However great European civilisation might have become, at one stage Indian civilisation had been at least its equal, even if now it had fallen on hard times. What needed to be done, therefore, was to restore the past, and to exchange resources on the basis of mutual profitability.

The idea of a splendid past which could be used to re-animate the present, was also pursued by H.T.Colebrooke. His researches were into what he believed was India's 'golden age', the Indo-Aryan period, the age of the Vedas. Like Ram Mohun Roy, the most noted of the Indian thinkers of the day, he wanted to prove that there were elements of contemporary Hindu practice that were deviations from the true understanding of the ancient sacred texts. His critique included attacks on *sati* (widow immolation) and the caste system. He also believed that the Vedas were basically monotheistic.⁴⁰

³⁸ G. Cannon, The Life and Mind of Oriental Jones (Cambridge, 1990) p.203.

³⁹ G.Cannon, 'Oriental Jones' (New York, 1964) p.185.

Whether Colebrooke was right about these issues or not, is not really the point here. The Orientalists were putting forward an emphatically favourable view of India's cultural past (or parts of it) and by suggesting a common origin for Indian and Western culture, were taking the opposite road to what might be described as a clash of cultures. It was now a question of finding a common heritage, not of replacing one culture by another.

To the names of Jones and Colebrooke should be added that of H.H.Wilson. Amongst contemporary Indian scholars and thinkers in Calcutta, Wilson was the most popular. To his general enthusiasm for India's past he added a specialised interest in medieval India which particularly appealed to the Bengali intelligentsia. Bengal's history had never been greatly influenced by the pure Indo-Aryan culture, so greatly beloved by Jones and Colebrooke. The Bengalis found a medievalist like Wilson more to their taste. It was Wilson who was close to the founder members of the Dharma Sabha, a body raised up to protest about the abolition of sati, which was in some measure the mouthpiece of the Hindu reaction to Westernisation.⁴¹ Wilson never defended *sati* as such. He did, however, claim that the British government had no right to abolish it in the way

⁴⁰ D. Kopf, British Orientalism p. 40.

⁴¹ The outcome of the dispute over the abolition of sati was not the only cause of alarm for conservative Hindus. The educational efforts of the missionaries, particularly Alexander Duff's successful school, also caused a reaction. Debendranath Tagore, for one, sought to combat the Christian onslaught by setting up a school run by his organisation the Tattvabodhini Sabha (See D. Tagore, Extract from the Auto-Biography of Maharishi Debendranath Tagore (Calcutta, 1909) pp. 38-9). On his own admission he could not bear to see the flower of Hindu youth coming under Christian influence simply for lack of good schooling under Hindu auspices. Later, for much the same reasons - his fear of Christian influence - he founded a newspaper.

that it did.⁴²

People like Jones, Colebrooke and Wilson did not believe that, as far as Hinduism was concerned, 'God was in his heaven and all was right with the world'. They admitted that Hinduism was in difficulties. The model they invoked, however, was the Renaissance and medieval Europe. There too a culture had become moribund. But it had been reinvigorated precisely by means of recalling its splendid past. The members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, of which Jones and Colebrooke were members, actually thought of themselves as India's equivalent of the Italian humanists, and were considered as such in the English press.⁴³

David Kopf puts these Orientalists in the vanguard of change.⁴⁴ His thesis essentially is that Indian intellectuals caught between their loyalty to their own heritage and their understandable feeling that Western culture was the 'wave of the future', found it easier to accept change when it was mediated to them by men such as Jones, Colebrooke and Wilson, who had a foot in both camps. Kopf makes the additional claim that it was the Anglicists, with their radical attempt to displace Indian culture by European, who created the backlash which led inevitably to the idea of civilisations in opposition and the rise of a more militant

⁴² Kopf, British Orientalism p. 175.

⁴³ *ibid.*, p. 41. It is interesting that an equally overt comparison was made by the missionaries with the European Reformation. They hoped that a Luther or Calvin would soon be on the scene. (*ibid.*, p. 284).

⁴⁴ This is the basic thesis of Kopf's book. See especially *ibid.*, p. 275.

Hindu consciousness and in due course of Indian nationalism .⁴⁵

Perhaps the weakness of Kopf's thesis is that it is overmuch a cultural perspective. For example, he has little to say about the economic forces which drove so many young men to want to learn English and therefore to be natural allies at some level of the Anglicist cause. It is reckoned that from a fairly early stage the Indian population of Calcutta began to learn English and, with an eye to the future, insist that their children do so too. The Hindu College founded in 1817 was a response to this growing demand. One estimate is that there were 3,000 Indian young men learning English in Calcutta by 1833.⁴⁶ It is also true that Western science and technology, with its demonstrable successes, appeared to be in some aspects incompatible with the Hindu tradition. The British success in establishing its presence in India and extending it was put down by many Indians to the British superiority in science and technology. These Indians, most of them young people, were unmoved by the Orientalist appeal to the past, nor were they particularly impressed by the traditional reaction of their elders. Indian nationalism was very often less a product of a resentment that the Hindu cultural heritage was being slighted, than a realisation that there was no reason why India too should not share in the scientific culture. Even at a purely cultural level, it is easy to underestimate the sheer enjoyment and fascination which many Indians derived from their introduction to the English language (just as the Orientalists had derived huge enjoyment and profit from their study of Indian languages). The

⁴⁵ D. Kopf, British Orientalism pp. 272, 280.

⁴⁶ R. Mitra, 'Unpublished Reports of the Calcutta School Society, Bengal', in Past and Present xcvi, part II, (1977), p. 151.

language of Shakespeare and Milton became 'popular' in India for its own sake: it was not just the 'language of the oppressors'. In practice also, because many of the Orientalists were preoccupied with cultural change, they attempted to separate cultural issues from economic or political questions. One widespread analogy they favoured was that of the Roman Empire with its Greek culture likened to British rule and Hindu culture. This idea was useful in confirming the hope that many Orientalists (and to be fair not just Orientalists) cherished, that Britain could continue to rule India while the cultural and religious life of the country went on undisturbed.

Anglicists

A second group, directly opposed to the Orientalists in educational matters, was the Anglicists. Amongst the missionaries their great representative was Alexander Duff. The cultural roots of Duff and his fellow Anglicists lay in the Scottish Enlightenment, in ideas of 'progress' and 'civilization' and more particularly in the Utilitarianism and Evangelicalism of the contemporary British scene.⁴⁷ They were the 'reformers', with a settled conviction that non-Western cultures were (at best) in need of reinvigoration and change.⁴⁸ Their

⁴⁷ In chapter 3 below I explore these ideas further in an attempt to summarise the themes and trends up to the middle of the century.

⁴⁸ Duff's position went much further than 'reinvigoration and change'. He was convinced that Western (Christian) culture was an inestimable boon which could be conferred through education on Indian society (See A. Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1839) especially pp. 517-525.) The way forward was the replacement of Indian ways of thinking, which were based on 'Hinduism' and steeped, as he believed, in error and superstition, by European culture based, again in his view, on the sure foundation of a Christian heritage.

background was the controversy between the Evangelical group of William Wilberforce, with Charles Grant as his adviser on Indian affairs, and the advocates of non interference in Indian customs, a debate which had been going on since the Charter discussions of 1793. In Britain this had culminated in the Charter Act (1813) which laid down, among other things, that a lakh of rupees a year was to be devoted to education, with special reference to 'the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned Natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences'.⁴⁹ Lord Hastings had avoided this enactment (the act laid down that the money should come out of surplus funds and Hastings claimed that there were none). John Adam, however, set up a General Committee of Public Instruction to administer funds and to control the already established Calcutta Madrassa (Arabic College), founded by Warren Hastings in 1781, and the Sanskrit College in Benares founded by Jonathan Duncan in 1794. With new funds further Oriental colleges were opened, as well as English schools and English classes in existing schools. Provision was also made for the teaching of Western science and medicine.

All this seemed a policy which ran counter to the charge, made by the Orientalists, of over zealous reform. In fact the fundamental policy decisions were still under

So he steadfastly insisted that in higher education at least, the medium of instruction should be English and the subjects taught should be, for example, English literature and 'modern' science. Oriental languages were unfit for higher education, he felt. Sanskrit was barred from his College on the grounds that it was inextricably bound up with Hindu thought patterns.

⁴⁹ Parliamentary Papers 1831-2, appendix 1, Extract of Letter in the Public Department from the Court of Directors to the Governor-General in Council, dated 6 September, 1813 (9:486).

discussion. Was the government laying new foundations? Or just repairing an existing system? The Committee for Public Instruction itself was divided. The young men were scornful of Orientalism, predicting that Western education would in any case swiftly disintegrate the whole Hindu and Muslim system - rather as rationalists in the French revolution predicted the disappearance of Christianity. Macaulay said 'It is my firm belief that, if our plans are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes of Bengal thirty years hence.' ⁵⁰

The ensuing Anglicist-Orientalist controversy is a familiar piece of history, but it is important for our purpose to be aware that the central feature of the debate was the future of education in India. The question as to whether English was to be the medium of higher education was precisely the issue that Macaulay's Minute (1835) addressed, though we need to beware of stereotyping Macaulay's contribution. The much quoted 'a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' should be read in its context. Macaulay envisaged that this class would be

interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern...To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms and science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the

⁵⁰ G.O.Trevelyan, Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay (vol 1), (Oxford, 1908) p. 328.

great mass of the population.’⁵¹

In a way, Macaulay was not advocating the replacement of the vernaculars by English but the creation of a ‘bridge’ language. Macaulay’s intervention was seen, and is still seen, as decisive in securing the Anglicist victory. Certainly, as a result of it, the decision was finally taken to finance an education that was English based, that is, both conducted in English and having to do primarily with Western culture. Whether Macaulay’s intervention was really as decisive as has been claimed or whether he simply rode in on the tide of increasing demand for English as a means of social and especially economic advancement is debatable. According to K.W.Jones:

Even before the debate was concluded, the transfer to English was well under way. In 1826 the government gave preference in junior law appointments to Indians with ‘suitable English certificates’. Consequently a knowledge of English became the key to government service and to careers in a number of allied fields, such as law, medicine, teaching, business and journalism - all forms of employment that brought individuals into regular contact with the new rulers.⁵²

What seems certain is that ‘Macaulayism’ as a cultural phenomenon has had

⁵¹ Cited in M.K. Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 125.

⁵² See K.W.Jones, Social and Religious Reform Movements in British India, (Cambridge, 1989) p.27.

profound effects. To this day, English remains the *lingua franca* of the educated classes in India and indeed the so-called 'link language' for Indian commerce and science, as well as education. Intellectuals from the sub-continent still understand that they are 'Macaulay's children' ⁵³ and this has to do not only with the English language, but with Western culture, indeed with modernisation itself.

Though the Anglicists are now generally seen as the villains of the piece, this was not necessarily the sentiment at the time. Behind the religious and cultural perspectives of the Anglicists there lay, it is true, a deep suspicion, and sometimes even a hatred and contempt, of Hindu culture.⁵⁴ For others, however, and this included some Indian thinkers, it was more a question of the necessary way forward on the road to social change and 'modernisation' without which India would continue to languish. Kopf's argument that 'modernisation with a foreign face' merely produced a reaction ⁵⁵- he calls the Dharma Sabha and its protest against the abolition of *sati*, 'the second wave of the Renaissance', is only one half of the story, as we have already noticed. It overlooks the positive Indian response to modernisation. Alexander Duff, despite being an arch-Anglicist, gained considerable popularity in Calcutta because he was an ally of those like Ram Mohun Roy who were seen as champions of reason against superstition. A Hindu, Harish Chandra Mittra,

⁵³ See e.g. Akbar S. Ahmed, Postmodernism and Islam (London, 1992) pp. 121 - 129.

⁵⁴ See e.g. A. Duff, India and Indian Missions p. 44.

⁵⁵ D. Kopf, British Orientalists p. 271 f.

writing a tribute to Duff ⁵⁶ was able to speak of Duff's Hindu opponents as 'votaries of a debasing superstition'. Mitra contrasted 'the dictum of sound philosophy - "inquire and you will arrive at the truth" ' with the motto of popular Puranic Hinduism: 'Believe blindly in, and submit unconditionally to, the Shasters, or you will be ruined.' Mitra's remark was in the context of Duff's religious instruction which he described as 'impregnating the young mind with the highest of all truths, viz, the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.' Many Hindus in Duff's day were clearly ready themselves to mount an attack on certain aspects of their own national faith. They were attracted by the apparent alliance between reason and progress (so important to Enlightenment thinkers) and believed that (again, in some ways) the old faith was holding them back. If Duff's attack on Hinduism could be seen as part of the march to reason and progress, then well and good. This did not mean, of course that they were willing to become active Christians.

Henry Derozio and his followers

The Anglicists might be said to include the Derozians, another group responding to, and seeking to cause, change. They were the inheritors of a tradition which stemmed from the influence in Calcutta of David Hare, who in turn looked back to the values and influence of the American and French Revolutions and the writings of men like Tom Paine. Henry Derozio (1809-31) has attained the status of a semi-legendary figure. His short lived assault on Hindu values may be seen as a

⁵⁶ See W.P.Duff, Memorials of Alexander Duff (London, 1890) pp. 32-70

youthful and intemperate attack which went too far too fast. It was condemned by nearly everyone at the time,⁵⁷ though radical Bengali thinkers have since sought to venerate his memory and that of his associates,⁵⁸ not simply because of the attack on Hindu obscurantism, but also because of the incipient criticism of British rule. The truth is that the free-thinking ideas and radical politics subscribed to by the group have ultimately had a greater impact on India than many even now would admit. The Derozian 'gospel' infiltrated Indian society in many ways. The Derozians were simply a spectacular instance of the process. Many aspects of Western rationalism, for example, were introduced, albeit unwittingly, by the missionaries themselves. They would have denied this absolutely at the time. They took an apparently firm stand against what they called 'godless rationalism' which they associated with Tom Paine and the French revolution.⁵⁹ Perhaps they should have noticed that the same forces which hounded Derozio and his followers were frequently those who opposed Christian missionary efforts. It is worth considering that much outrage was expressed (almost contemporaneously with Derozio's dismissal from his post at the Hindu College) at the attempt made by the missionary, Alexander Duff, to influence College students by using his house for evening lectures.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Not everyone. J.C.Marshman wrote a sympathetic obituary in the *Samachar Darpan*. See M.A.Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal (Oxford, 1972) p.227.

⁵⁸ This is the approach taken by G. Chattopadhyaya, Awakening in Bengal (Calcutta, 1965).

⁵⁹ See e.g. A. Duff, India and Indian Missions p.267.

⁶⁰ G. Smith, Life of Alexander Duff, 2 vols, (London, 1879) vol. 1 p. 146 f.

Vernacularists: a missionary perspective

A third 'party', even more loosely a conjunction than the Orientalists, might be designated the 'Vernacularists'. This title is used to describe those who were primarily interested in the contemporary culture and the study of local languages such as the Baptist missionaries at Serampore.⁶¹

The Vernacularists were not 'on the side of Hindu culture' in the way that the Orientalists were, largely because they were in the main a missionary party and found it difficult to separate Indian culture from Hinduism. Their intimate contact with contemporary Indian languages, which they learnt to use in translation work and field preaching, inoculated them, however, from an Anglicist approach. More than this, it implied a certain respect for the local culture. There was a tacit admission that the vernacular language was sufficient for conveying the words of the Bible and that Biblical truth could be adequately expressed in vernacular preaching. Lamin Sanneh has developed this theme at length and specifically names William Carey as an example of a missionary who was dedicated to translation work and who as a result honoured the vernacular languages of India and the cultures that lay behind them.⁶² Further it might be argued that the Vernacularists escaped the prevalent tendency to relegate Indian culture to the past. As Edward Said has put it: 'From roughly the end of the eighteenth century, when in its age, distance and richness the Orient was rediscovered by Europe, its

⁶¹ See below chapter 4 .

⁶² Lamin Sanneh, Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture (Maryknoll, NY, 1989) pp. 101-5.

history had been a paradigm of antiquity and originality, functions that drew Europe's interests in acts of recognition and acknowledgement but *from* which Europe moved as its own industrial, economic and cultural development seemed to leave the Orient far behind.' ⁶³ Both Orientalists and Anglicists seemed to have left the Orient 'far behind'. Not so the Vernacularists who were urgently interacting with the language and culture of contemporary Bengal.

In the long term the Vernacularists undoubtedly had a profound effect on the cultural history of India. Their affirmation of the vernaculars helped to define and develop local languages and to contribute, though this was not necessarily what they intended, to the renaissance of Indian religion so apparent in the nineteenth century. This in turn led to a growth in nationalist sentiment. In the context of the Bengal Renaissance, however, they were not so significant a party as either Orientalists or Anglicists. Though they did influence the debate through their journalism and informal contacts, they tended to lack access to government when it came to determining policy.

As mentioned the Vernacularists were mainly missionaries but in weighing up the missionary contribution to the debate we need to be careful not to over-categorise. They were by no means all of the same persuasion. John Wilson, one of the foremost pioneers of missionary education in Bombay,⁶⁴ is generally

⁶³ E.Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered' in F.Barker (ed.), Literature , Politics and Theory (Methuen, 1986) p. 215.

⁶⁴ John Wilson reached Bombay in 1829 as a missionary of the Scottish Missionary Society. An English-medium school was established in 1832 and a college section added in 1836. Wilson served as Principal for the rest of his life.

reckoned to be an Orientalist. His extraordinary and impressive familiarity with the languages and culture of India's past makes this a straightforward identification. Wilson was genuinely popular with the Bombay intelligentsia of his day because of the high value he set on Indian culture, particularly the 'high culture' of India's past. His achievements as an Orientalist were amazing.⁶⁵ Yet Wilson could also be described as a Vernacularist. Certainly he was much in favour of vernacular schools. He disagreed with his fellow Church of Scotland missionary, Alexander Duff, ⁶⁶ about the place of English education, believing that he was over-emphasising it. As he said in a letter to Lord Elphinstone, 'vernacular schools are found to be very beneficial in diffusing, at very small expense, much useful and divine knowledge among the lower orders

In 1857 he helped to establish Bombay University, becoming its vice-chancellor in 1869. He was also a pioneer of education for the low castes. His learning was legendary. He was editor of the *Oriental Christian Spectator* (1830-62) the first scholarly research journal in Western India. He attracted a number of high caste and Parsi converts, and influenced a variety of social reformers in Western India.

⁶⁵ G. Smith, The Life of John Wilson. (London, 1879) Chapter Ten gives a detailed account of Wilson's achievements as a scholar. Just in terms of language he was not only an expert in the local vernaculars - Marathi and Gujarati - but in Hindustani, Persian, Hebrew (he wrote a Marathi - Hebrew grammar for the Bombay Jews), Arabic and of course Sanskrit, as well as various dialect forms. He was the foremost contemporary expert on the Zand language, the study of which gave him the tools to produce his famous book 'The Parsi Religion'. Parallel to this was his research into India's religions, archaeology and history, much of it through original manuscripts and inscriptions. He was the recognised expert on the various cave temples in the neighbourhood of Bombay. He produced a popular history of early Aryan civilisation ('India Three Thousand Years Ago') and a history of the near-contemporary events surrounding the suppression of infanticide in Western India. He was President of the Bombay Asiatic Society and the founder of the *Oriental Christian Spectator*. And this is just a selection of his many activities.

⁶⁶ Wilson went out to India with the Scottish Missionary Society but the Society's missionaries were transferred to General Assembly's supervision in 1835.

of people.’⁶⁷ At one stage in his missionary career Wilson’s reluctance to give precedence to the work of English medium education spurred the Bombay corresponding committee of the General Assembly mission - convinced Anglicists as they were - to attempt to replace him. ‘In gratifying this desire for the natives to learn our language, we would most solicitously provide against the horrors of irreligion by communicating and recommending the religion of God. We need for this object, a man qualified for the instruction of the natives in the English language (emphasis mine), and for the teaching and preaching, through this medium, the Gospel of Christ.’⁶⁸ Wilson came from the same mission as Alexander Duff, who was neither an Orientalist nor a Vernacularist but an Anglicist.

Ram Mohun Roy

Dividing up the contenders for cultural leadership into ‘parties’ - Orientalists, Anglicists, Vernacularists - may not leave a space for individuals who do not fit easily into any of these categories. Ram Mohun Roy, the so-called ‘Founder of Modern India’, well illustrates the danger of trying to place the chief actors on the Bengal scene into well defined camps. He was a prophet of modernisation, even Westernisation. His famous attacks on sati and his support for Hindu women have a modern ring about them. His reworking of Hinduism often sounded very much like the eighteenth century rationalist reworking of

⁶⁷ Smith, Life of Wilson p. 258.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p. 20.

Christianity in Britain and elsewhere. As K.W.Jones has put it, 'For Roy, religion could not be judged solely on its own internal scriptural evidence, but it must also be measured by reason and shown to be free of contradiction and functioning to uphold a beneficial social order'.⁶⁹ This appeal to reason and also to universal standards of social justice struck Hindu traditionalists as strikingly new. Nevertheless Roy was not an Anglicist in the sense that he believed in the superiority of Western culture. In religious terms he was a Hindu reformer, who believed that Hinduism had indeed taken some wrong paths - largely as a result of superstition and priestcraft - but who believed as firmly that Christianity had equally taken wrong paths, and that a reformed Hinduism was at least the measure of Christianity. His aim was 'to prove to my European friends that the superstitious practices which deform the Hindoo religion have nothing to do with the pure spirit of its dictates'.⁷⁰ This enabled him, in his own eyes at any rate, to be true to his Indian heritage and yet to welcome many features of Westernisation, indeed of 'Western' religion. Thus he was opposed to idolatry and casteism, and such practices as *sati*, and also in favour of such cultural developments as the introduction of English based education.⁷¹ The Brahmo

⁶⁹ K.W.Jones, Social and Religious Reform Movements p. 31.

⁷⁰ Cited in D.H.Killingley, 'Vedanta and Modernity' in C.H. Phillips and M.D. Wainwright, eds., Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernism c. 1830-1850 (London, 1976), p. 130. Killingley is citing Roy's Preface to 'Abridgement of the Vedant' in the English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy K.Nag and D.Burman, eds., Part II p. 60.

⁷¹ Alexander Duff claims that in the setting up his first school he had the support of 'a native of rank and influence' and we are all but certain that this was Ram Mohun Roy. Roy apparently recommended the first five students. (A. Duff, India and Indian Missions pp. 525-552. See, in particular, p. 530 for the reference to Ram Mohan Roy. In his later version of events, however, Duff

Samaj which stemmed from the life and thought of Ram Mohun Roy, while never large, was highly influential in mediating 'modernisation' to Hindus.⁷²

The dynamics of cultural change

Most commentators agree that in the first few decades of the nineteenth century important changes were taking place in India as a result of the impact of Westernisation or modernisation, and that they were mostly accepted, even welcomed.⁷³ The Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge, for example, which met from 1838 to 1848, was designed to enable the intellectuals of Calcutta to keep abreast of the new knowledge that was coming from the West. It included several prominent members of the Brahmo Samaj (such as Debendranath Tagore) as one might expect. There were also converts to Christianity like Krishna Mohun Bannerjea. However, more surprisingly, there were a number of those who had made no formal break with Hinduism and even members of the Dharma Sabha.⁷⁴ All these groups believed that, at the very least, the challenge of Westernisation,

played down the help he had from Roy. This was probably due to the embarrassment suffered by Duff in being associated with someone who had, at least as understood by many Christians, attacked the missionary cause in his dispute with Joshua Marshman over Roy's 'The Precepts of Jesus'. (Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 205).

⁷² M.M. Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (Madras, 1976) p. 329.

⁷³ Almost everybody. However Barun De's 'The Colonial Context of the Bengal Renaissance' in Phillips and Wainwright (eds.) Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernism argues that there was not much change.

⁷⁴ The membership of the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge is recorded and analysed in G. Chattopadhyaya, Awakening in Bengal (Calcutta, 1965) pp.400-16.

and even Christianity, had made it possible for Hinduism and Indian culture to see itself in a new light.

What is not agreed is how the changes took place, or perhaps who were the main protagonists in causing these changes. Some would say that it was primarily the work of the Orientalists - we have mentioned the work of David Kopf in this regard; some, such as Eric Stokes and Kenneth Jones would put it down to the rational and Utilitarian thought of the early nineteenth century ; Kenneth Ingham among others would lay greater emphasis on those consistently committed to social reform, the products themselves of the Evangelical revival. In the same vein some, such as M.M.Thomas and more recently Vishal Mangalwadi, see the Christian message as containing the seeds of revolutionary change.⁷⁵

Overall we have to balance the considerable pressures that the missionaries experienced in relating to their home constituencies with their experience of a complex Indian context. At home national politics were increasingly influenced by the rising missionary movement, itself an offspring of the Evangelical revival, and by the equally influential Utilitarians. Both Evangelicals and Utilitarians were great believers in education. In the church context the growing power of Dissent challenged the Church of England to stir itself and be involved in mission. Carey's Serampore was matched by Middleton's Bishop's College. In Scotland the Moderates continued to dominate the Assembly of the Church of Scotland but with

⁷⁵ See Kopf, The British Orientalists; E.Stokes, The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford, 1959); T.R.Metcalf, Ideologies of the Raj (Cambridge, 1995); K.Ingham, Reformers in India (Cambridge, 1956), Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ and V.Mangalwadi, India: the Grand Experiment (Farnham, 1997).

an increasingly Evangelical agenda. Alexander Duff, the first Church of Scotland missionary, was an educational missionary as such. What is more he arrived with a conviction that the English language was the necessary medium of instruction for Indian higher education.

These agendas were then put to the test in India, itself changing, as it responded to the flow of Western and Christian thought. Welcome as many of the new ideas were, there was also a powerful local reaction. The value of the indigenous was not forgotten and in the religious sphere, traditional Indian religions began to express themselves in new ways. How to respond to this situation was very much the question as far as thoughtful Indians and Englishmen alike were concerned, including the educational missionaries. The three 'parties' – Orientalists, Anglicists and Vernacularists – illustrate, if nothing else, that there was disagreement about this. Educational missionaries could be found in all these parties. The decisive moment seemed to have come with Macaulay's Minute, and the triumph of the Anglicists. The new wave of educational missionaries, men like Alexander Duff, were Anglicists themselves, partly instigators of the changes and partly inheritors. Yet this was the beginning of the story not the end as far as missionary education was concerned. The next chapter examines the themes and trends of missionary education as they continued to develop.

Chapter 3: Themes and Trends up to 1857

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the assumptions, aims and themes of the missionary educational enterprise up to 1857. I shall then examine in more detail the way these are exemplified by the work of the Baptist Missionary Society (chapter 4) and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (chapter 5). This examination will demonstrate, I believe, the contention of this chapter (summarised in the last section) that there was a long-standing debate between 'civilising' and 'christianising' in British missionary circles, and that the advocates of the former policy (i.e. that 'civilising' must come first) proved more powerful.

The missionaries

By 1850 more than one quarter of the world wide Protestant missionary force was stationed in India.¹

Many of the early missionaries came from what Stuart Piggin has described as a 'middling' section of the British population, from a dynamically mobile upward moving class, which placed considerable stress on the importance of individual

¹ R.Fitzgerald, 'A "Peculiar and Exceptional Measure": The Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India in the Later Nineteenth Century' in 'R.Bickers and R.Seton, Missionary Encounters, Sources and Issues (Richmond, 1996) p.179 n. 28.

initiative and talent and on the individual being able to rise through the ranks.² Of these the majority were men, indeed during the first half of the nineteenth century the main missionary societies largely took the view that only ordained men were fitted to engage in 'spiritual warfare' with the forces of paganism and heathenism in India.³ With the increasing emphasis on ordained men the missionary force became not only more numerous but more prestigious. Those recruited from the professions increased as a percentage of the total numbers in each decade between 1809 and 1858 and missions had become a respectable pursuit by the middle of the nineteenth century. This had not always been the case initially.⁴

Educational assumptions: the Enlightenment

The ongoing influence of the Enlightenment on the missionaries' educational philosophy is also very evident. Boyd Hilton comments on the evidence provided by Stuart Piggin of the origins and training of the early missionaries. "Most evangelical missionaries were influenced by the Enlightenment, hostile to enthusiasm, serenely confident in the power of human reason, and 'dedicated to the ethical value of efficiency and usefulness'." ⁵

² S.Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858 (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984) pp.40-1.

³ Fitzgerald, 'A "Peculiar and Exceptional Measure"' in Bickers and Seton eds., Missionary Encounters p. 176.

⁴ Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries p. 42.

⁵ B. Hilton, The Age of Atonement (Oxford, 1988) p. 379.

a. Universal values as a basis for a just society

This confidence in the Enlightenment took a number of forms. First of all Enlightenment thinking presupposed the possibility of an appeal to universal values, such as reason, justice and truth. These were self-evident to all 'enlightened' people. For example in the *sati* controversy there was an appeal to such values against local religious practice. 'Are the sacred principles of justice to be abrogated because private individuals are mistaken in their notion of the worship which is acceptable to the Deity?' ⁶ asked an outraged parliamentarian as he considered the immolation of widows. The Baptist missionaries in particular, through their journal 'The Friend of India', played an important part in the controversy over the abolition of *sati*, and it was their conviction that education enabled the mind to 'see through' inherited superstition and the oppression that went with it, and connect with a wider world of reason and fair play. Joshua Marshman's 'Hints Relative to Native Schools' claimed that education could make the peasant or artificer 'less liable to become a prey to fraud among his countrymen' and 'far better able to claim for himself that protection from oppression which it is the desire of every enlightened government to grant.' ⁷ In other words, knowledge was the high road to (political) freedom. Tyranny and exploitation were kept in place by fraud, and

⁶ From Parliamentary Papers (1823:21).

⁷ Extract from Marshman's 'Hints' is given in James Mill on Education (Cambridge, 1969) p.110.

the uneducated were easily deceived.

b. A rational system based on 'evidences'

Here we encounter another Enlightenment way of thinking. Knowledge was a whole system, or a complete building. Foundations must be carefully laid and wisely built upon. To leave out any significant part was to build badly.⁸ Also it was a system built on reason rather than experience. Examining rational evidence secured and enlarged the 'building'. This may seem remote from British missionaries working in India but in fact was typical of the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment, and Scottish Common-sense philosophy, which characterised many Evangelicals of this period.

There were a number of Scotsmen involved in missionary education during our period - Duff, Wilson and John Mack at Serampore, just to name three - but the approach was typical of the educated Englishman as well. The ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment were spread through the writings of Dugald Stewart and the Edinburgh reviewers, and in terms of theology through Thomas

⁸ A typical Enlightenment educational thinker was Johann Friedrich Herbart. For Herbart, education was the central formative influence on the whole intellectual and moral life of the human being. Without the educational process, the human being would remain a blank. Further, only a wide and balanced curriculum could bring about the many-sided human development which was the goal of good education. See e.g. S.J.Curtis and M.E.A. Boulton, A Short History of Educational Ideas, (University Tutorial Press, London, 1953) p. 358, 363.

Chalmers to the English Evangelicals.⁹ The key lectures on rational method which formed part of the Scottish Enlightenment - those of George Hill - were being used in Serampore in the 1850s by the Baptists.¹⁰ In other words the assumptions were widespread.

We have an example of such a complete rational system in John C. Webster's book The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India. Webster examined, among other matters, the theology of American Presbyterian missionaries. Most of them were from Princeton and their outlook had been formed by the systematic theology of Charles Hodge. This combined a confidence in Scripture with a belief in the primacy of reason. According to this method, theology relied upon external evidences and reason rather than religious experience for its verification. As a result it encouraged interaction at this level, the level of rational demonstration of the 'evidences' and intellectual 'conviction of truth'.¹¹ This method was widely applied by the early educational missionaries and determined their educational strategies.

⁹ See, A.C.Chitnis, The Scottish Enlightenment and Early Victorian English Society (Croom Helm, 1986).

¹⁰ See p.126.

¹¹ John C. Webster, The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India (Delhi, 1976) p. 33-4. For the connection between Scottish Commonsense philosophy, especially Thomas Reid, and Charles Hodge see: P.Hicks, 'Thomas Reid and Charles Hodge' in Appraisal Vol. 1 Supplementary issue 1997 Part II.

c. Western Science

Rational thought included the new science. The West was considered the sole seat of science, and the science of Indian scripture and tradition was considered worthless. Western science, with its appeal to a universal rationality, was one of the many ways that Hindu superstition would be undermined, or so it was believed.

It is worth remembering the so-called Delhi Renaissance in this connection. The Anglo-Oriental College in Delhi in the 1840s and early 1850s presented an instructive example of the way that Western science, as part of Enlightenment thought, made an impact on non-Christian religious traditions, in this case those of the Muslim community in Delhi. It was also an interesting example of the way that an educational enterprise provoked Muslim concern about Christian activity in the city.¹² Founded in 1825 the Delhi College offered by the 1830s parallel but separate curricula in its 'Oriental' and 'English' departments. The English side of the College became increasingly popular during the 1830s and 40s. There was a new emphasis in the 1840s on Western science: mathematics, astronomy, experimental science. Conversely the number of students studying Arabic fell. Even in the Oriental Department, the tendency of the College administration was to diminish the religious and scholastic content in favour of science. This was thought necessary to combat the supposed bigotry inculcated by the study of the Arabic and Persian classics.

¹² The following account of the Delhi 'stir' is based on Avril A. Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India (London, 1993) pp. 195-219.

The teaching of science in the Oriental Department (through translations into Urdu) was initially highly popular, and historians have spoken of a 'Muslim Renaissance', akin to the Hindu Renaissance in Calcutta somewhat earlier. At this point relations with the Muslim intelligentsia (the ulama) were generally good, though the idea of attracting to the College the sons of the displaced Muslim elites ('placation through education') never really worked. Up to 1852 there was a delicate balance and reasonable goodwill. Part of this stemmed from the practice of 'neutrality towards religion' which was the College's overt policy.

In 1852, however, there was a Muslim 'stir' and it emanated from the classrooms of the Delhi College. This was a reaction to the science which had been taught for some time at the College, particularly by Ram Chandra (the head of the translation programme) which appeared, so it was said, to be subversive of traditional Muslim (and Hindu) scientific ideas. One of the issues was a Copernican world view, something which had already been debated between the missionaries and the Muslim intelligentsia at Agra and elsewhere. To make matters worse Ram Chandra was baptised as a Christian (in 1852) and began to aid the missionaries in their efforts to influence the educated Muslims. Topics such as astronomy and the nature of miracle were very much at the centre of the discussions. The 'stir' occasioned some withdrawals from the College, though not at a disastrous level. However, the period of goodwill was decisively over.

d. The scientific method: cause and effect

Teaching science and adopting a rational 'scientific' method, then as now, came close to each other. As David Bebbington has pointed out ¹³ another aspect of Enlightenment thinking adopted by evangelicals and missionaries was the conviction that the pattern of cause and effect, the scientist's natural assumption, underlay all phenomena. The idea that Christian education had certain social consequences ('root' and 'fruit') inadvertently smuggled this Enlightenment idea into the gospel. Education was seen as a 'cause' which would produce great 'effects'. It was a lever which would move huge loads, a mine which would, for example, undermine the edifice of Hinduism and bring it down. This was one of Alexander Duff's favourite images, when contrasting his methods to that of the 'simple evangelist'.

While you engage in directly separating as many precious atoms from the mass as the stubborn resistance to ordinary appliances can admit, we shall, with the blessing of God, devote our time and strength to the preparing of a mine, and the settling of a train which will one day explode and tear up the whole from its lowest depth.¹⁴

In other words he believed that by educational means it was possible to undermine the whole Hindu world view. When this happened 'the greatest part

¹³ 17. D.Bebbington, Evangelicalism in Modern Britain (London, 1988) p. 59.

¹⁴ A. Duff, India and Indian Missions . p. 109.

of the manners, customs, and habits of those most enlightened, must undergo a total revolution.' Duff believed strongly in the indissolubility of religion and customary behaviour. 'Religion and its rites' and 'the forms of business and the practices and habits of ordinary life' were 'blended in one undistinguished mass.' The conclusion was: 'Once let the foundation be undermined, and the whole fabric must crumble into fragments.'¹⁵ He was correct in this, but wrong to imagine that Western education or the rational scientific method would of itself destroy the foundation.¹⁶ So education was the key. Progress, which could mean progress in the gospel, progress in civilisation, progress in bringing the light of useful knowledge, was inevitable if only education could be provided.

e. Providentialism

English Protestant Christians in our period (uniformly up to the 1860s and occasionally beyond) demonstrated a belief in Divine Providence – that God was at work in both good and evil circumstances to bring about his purposes – and this belief, too, was expressed in an Enlightenment framework. This meant that they had great confidence that the history they inhabited, including Britain's recent imperial successes, was part of God's plan to bless the world,

¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 593-4.

¹⁶ This optimistic view, from the point of Christian mission, of the relation between Christianity and Hinduism was, to be fair to Duff, occasionally tempered by the admission that Hinduism was a powerful cultural and religious force. He admitted that 'the Brahmanical faith' had 'for three thousand years exerted an omnipotency of malignant energy over the intellect and morals of India' and that it was still 'a living, operative, tremendous reality'. (Duff, *India and Indian Missions* p.44).

and in the particular case this study addresses, to bring the light of the gospel to India. It also meant that India became a 'trust' and the British were 'trustees'. Cause and effect were involved in this relationship too. If Britain betrayed her trust, and ceased to act as a Godly nation and to promote the gospel, then Britain would be punished. The Indian Mutiny was widely interpreted in this way. Similarly, it only required faithfulness on the part of Christians, and the task of converting India would certainly be achieved. God's purpose was clear and he would bless the 'means' put at his disposal.¹⁷

f. Progress

There was here another Enlightenment motif, that of progress itself. For the missionaries it was a sort of respectable millenarianism. The millennium would be the result of gradual improvement - a belief that shaded into the idea of progress. Evangelicals, in particular, identified the future epoch as a time of peace and glory for the church that would, significantly, follow persistent mission. In the missionary literature we find this idea clearly stated in William Carey's Enquiry and it continued to be a powerful stimulus to action.¹⁸ The link between education and progress was unquestioned. However, this confidence in

¹⁷ These themes are widely discussed in B.Stanley, 'Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England, c. 1838-73' (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979).

¹⁸ W.Carey, An Enquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens 1792 (Reissued, edited E.A.Payne, London, 1961) p. 12.

progress was usually over confidence, leading to all sorts of exaggerated hopes and claims, and we can find evidence of this throughout the long nineteenth century. So shrewd an observer as Bishop Heber spoke, as early as 1823, of 'the great change which seems to be taking place in the character of this vast nation, or at least in the province of Bengal.'¹⁹ Bishop Caldwell pointed to the 'benefits' of the British rule as an evidence that Christianity held the future for India. 'It was not the "quietism" of the Bhagavad Gita that was covering India with a network of railways and telegraphs' he claimed.²⁰ Max Muller said 'If we get such men as Rammohun Roy or Keshub Chunder Sen, and if we get an Archbishop of Canterbury who knows what Christianity really is, India will be christianised in all that is essential, in the twinkling of an eye.'²¹ Robert Nesbit wrote in 1853, 'I have great hopes that the next thirty years...will witness a progress a thousandfold greater than the past. Probably by that time, idolatry will be abolished'.²²

Knowledge was deemed to be the key to this much desired progress. This is clearly stated by Bishop Caldwell. 'It must be admitted', he said 'that Christianity is the only religion known...which is really a friend to progress. It proclaims to all men that knowledge is power, that knowledge is victory, and

¹⁹ R.Heber, Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India vol. 1 (London, 1849) p. 41.

²⁰ Bishop Caldwell on 'Krishna and the Bhagavad Gita' (1894) cited in E. Sharpe, Not To Destroy But To Fulfil (Gleerup, Uppsala, 1965) pp. 28-9.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 47 note 5.

²² J.Murray Mitchell, Memoirs of Robert Nesbit (London, 1858) p. 334.

thereby it fills the world with discoveries and wonders.’²³ The name of the earliest Christian mission, the Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698, was an indication of this confidence. The SPCK tended to concentrate on such instruments as schools, libraries, and printing presses for this reason. We can see something of the same attitude coming through in the reliance of many of the leading educational missionaries (Duff, Wilson, and at a later date the Cambridge and Oxford missionaries to Delhi and Calcutta) on lecture courses and debates, even more than on preaching. Arthur Mayhew, who in 1926 reviewed the whole course of British education in India, had a clear understanding of the fallacies of Enlightenment thinking. He says: ‘In the 1830s there was a false psychology. All minds were alike and all minds that had no Western information were equally empty and receptive. What was ‘reasonable’ in England, must be reasonable in India, and would, when forcibly presented, prevail. Get the right kind of information from England in sufficient quantities and the receptacles would soon be filled.’²⁴

g. Spread of literacy

The spread of literacy was also a bond between missionary education and the Enlightenment. Evangelical religion demanded among other things the spread of Bible knowledge, if possible through reading the Bible for oneself. This meant, of course, that there was a need for schools to teach people to read. ‘The

²³ R.Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Mission (London, 1857).

²⁴ A. Mayhew, The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy 1835-1920 (London, 1926) p.58.

missionary archives...create the impression that the preaching of the Gospel and the spread of literacy were almost synonymous' says Dick Kooiman, speaking particularly of the archives of the London Missionary Society, but he might have been referring to the archives of any mission.²⁵ But the educational programme was, after all, in harmony with the goal of eighteenth-century progressive thinkers: the enlightenment of the masses.

h. Character development

An aspect of Enlightenment thought characteristic of missionary education was the belief that character development (moral education) was the most important aspect of education. This partly explains why the missionaries, almost without exception, were so opposed to 'secular' schools, i.e. schools, such as those the government maintained, which allowed no specific religious instruction. There was an unquestioned belief (on the part of the missionaries of all persuasions) that religion and morality went together, the latter flowing from the former. Nor was it just the missionaries. The models for the schools and colleges that were founded in India by men such as Marshman, Wilson and Duff, and missions such as the SPG and the CMS, were the charity schools and the grammar and public schools in Britain. In the charity schools children were taught first of all to know and understand the catechisms. They learnt the principles and duties of the Christian religion in order to make them faithful servants of God and

²⁵ D.Kooiman, 'Who Is To Benefit From Missionary Education? Travancore in the 1930s' in Bickers and Seton, Missionary Encounters p. 155.

loyal members of the Church. As such they would grow into good people and useful members of society. In some cases writing and arithmetic were added and schools might be coupled to technical institutions, but this was of secondary importance to 'character building'. In the grammar and public schools again there was an emphasis on character training. The qualities and moral values of a Christian English gentleman epitomised this concept. Team games were important as was chapel attendance. The curriculum was heavily academic, with an emphasis on Classics, because the Classics were believed to be a repository of character-forming truths and more broadly because the English educational system was constructed on renaissance ideals of learning and civic virtue.²⁶

i. Emphasis on the classics

The emphasis on the Classics (i.e. the Classics of the Western European tradition) in Indian secondary schools at this time was therefore not surprising. It was part of the Enlightenment inheritance. Though it was soon to come under attack, the idea that the study of classical languages was essential to a liberal education was still very much the orthodoxy in the early Victorian period. According to this theory, as Sheldon Rothblatt has put it: 'The study of classics improved taste by forming it on the highest standards, furthered the art of public speaking, strengthened the reading and writing of English, transmitted correct moral ideas, and, of course, disciplined the cognitive

²⁶ B. Holmes ed., Educational Policy and the Mission School: Case Studies from the British Empire (London, 1968) p. 26.

faculties.’²⁷ The Rev Edward Whitehead writing to the SPG in September 1839 about Vepery Grammar School in Madras revealed in two separate comments the importance of Classics in the curriculum. ‘The school is divided into seven classes, the lowest consisting of children unable to read. The greatest difficulty which I experience is teaching English composition. Strange to say, they can compose in Latin prose, and even in Latin verse, with more facility and correctness than in English prose.’ Again, commenting on a certain J.A.King: ‘I find however a great drawback in the limited extent of his classical acquirements; altho’ an excellent mathematician, a good geographer, and writing Master, he understands very little Latin and no Greek - I fear this will prove a more serious impediment as the scale of attainment throughout the classes becomes higher’.²⁸

Educational aims: (1) raising a native agency

The continuing emphasis on education also reflected the need to educate converts and train assistants. This will be one of the main themes of the chapters on the Baptist missionaries and Bishop’s College. ‘Raising a native agency’ was frequently commended as a policy by the early missionaries and the failure to do this is a sad commentary on missionary paternalism. The need

²⁷ S.Rothblatt, Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education (London, 1976) p. 147. Rothblatt, however, demonstrates that while Classical literature remained important in terms of research, it grew less influential as a source of morals (p. 170).

²⁸ Rev Edward Whitehead to A.M.Campbell, September 27, 1839, Vepery, USPG.C.IND.1.12.71.

was well understood. For example, Stuart Piggin's study of the training of LMS missionary students at Gosport Theological Academy and Missionary Seminary under David Bogue (the leading light from 1800) shows that Bogue's missionary strategy included an insistence on training native clergy to be missionaries in their own country and ministers in their own churches. He urged the establishment of seminaries to train natives for the work of preaching, suggesting that if successful they would make it unnecessary to send foreign missionaries.²⁹ John Wilson of Bombay made the even more controversial point that, all things considered, native Christian workers were more useful than missionaries.

How can we call one of our own white-faced students from our Divinity Hall, and ordain him per saltum to the ministry among a people of whom he understands nothing and knows nothing, as we have more than once done, and pass over a black-faced student, duly licensed and qualified, and tried by extraordinary providences, and bone of the bone, and flesh of the flesh and every way cognisant of the people to whom he is to be sent, I do not see...Native ministers are, under Christ, my great hope of the evangelisation of India...I would give them apostolical liberty...The more we trust them the more they will trust and defer to ourselves.³⁰

Indeed this study will argue that much of the missionary education enterprise in its early phases was centred around raising up a native agency and that this

²⁹ Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries p. 178-9.

³⁰ Smith, Life of John Wilson (London, 1879) p.405.

was the initial reason why education became such an important focus in the missionary enterprise. Thus Bishop's College and Serampore, and their 'feeder' schools, could be seen as (failed) attempts to do just this. It will also be argued that the abandonment of this as the primary goal was something which distorted the whole enterprise.

Educational aims: (2) conversions still an aim

Despite the emphasis on raising a native agency, conversions remained an aim up to and beyond 1857. The theological rationale for this was the familiar emphasis on 'saving souls' for the life to come. Thus, as Rosemary Fitzgerald has pointed out, 'the missionary task was seen as less concerned with responding to the sorrows of this life than with ensuring spiritual readiness for the next.'³¹ The General Conference of Bengal Protestant Missionaries meeting in Calcutta in 1855 passed a resolution asserting that the aim of Christian educational institutions was 'to lead all their scholars to the cross of Christ', not simply 'to elevate the people in the ordinary elements of civilisation and knowledge.' The same resolution claimed that every missionary should learn their local vernacular and engage in the preaching of the gospel. There were, however, those who dissented claiming that the resolution as it stood was virtually a censure on other sorts of missionary work, including education.³² A

³¹ Fitzgerald, 'A "Peculiar and Exceptional Measure"' in Bickers and Seton, Missionary Encounters. p. 176.

³² Cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) pp. 158-61.

little later the Punjab Missionary Conference (1862-3) returned to the same theme. Rev. C.W. Forman admitted that it might well be true that the schools and colleges were doing 'a great preparatory work' but felt that this was not sufficient. 'Our great object' he said 'is the conversion of India', and warned that 'the desire to see our pupils make progress in secular knowledge, and compare favourably with those of other schools, the interest that we ourselves feel in science, literature etc., and the desire to see the number of our pupils increase, will all combine to tempt us to neglect this one grand object for which are schools are established.'³³ We shall see in the second half of our study that Foreman was right, in the sense that, for some, conversions as the primary aim for missionary education gave way to other aims; however, not for everyone. It remained the policy of the LMS, for example, to close schools where it was felt that there was no longer the possibility of spreading Christian knowledge, even as late on as the 1930s. At much the same time an LMS missionary, contemplating the opportunity of a mass movement amongst the Ezhavas expressed the opinion that this would only happen if substantial educational assistance was given.³⁴

Educational aims: (3) vernacular and English medium education

It is clear that most missions were happy to begin with primary education in

³³ *ibid.*, p.197.

³⁴ Kooiman, 'Who Is To Benefit...?' in Bickers and Seton, Missionary Encounters pp. 158-9.

the vernacular, and often continued to put large efforts there. When the Baptists, for example, founded their college at Serampore (1818) they already had 10,000 pupils in 92 primary schools in the surrounding districts.³⁵ Similarly between 1820 and 1835 Rhenius of the CMS opened 107 small schools in south Tamilnadu. Among his reasons for doing so were that it provided an incentive for the villagers to 'call the missionary', that it created a literate Bible reading people and that it produced future leaders and helpers for the Church.³⁶ In the same way John Wilson in Bombay, despite his more sophisticated urban setting, put great emphasis on vernacular education. Wilson's strategy emphasised the poor, 'to whom the gospel is preached', as he said, and for whom vernacular schools were the only possibility. His belief was that from them 'the first body of converts may be probably raised in India'. His long term plan was that native missionaries would be raised up from among the converts educated from the earliest days in a Christian atmosphere. He also pointed out that higher institutions would have to depend on a body of Christians from whom to select their agents (precisely Bishop College's problem as we shall see in chapter 5). He quoted again 'to the poor (Wilson's italics) the gospel is preached'.³⁷

Nevertheless, the way that English medium education brought the more

³⁵ B. Stanley, History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792-1992 (Edinburgh, 1992) p. 51.

³⁶ Hugald Grafe, Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Bangalore, 1990) p.190.

³⁷ Smith, Life of Wilson pp. 88-9.

wealthy and influential classes into close contact with the missionaries, was a compelling reason to shift away from vernacular elementary schools to schools and colleges teaching English. In this shift, as we shall see, missionary education played a significant part. We have also seen that buttressing this policy, which may have been bred in expediency, was the conviction that contact with Western civilisation would undermine the Hindu worldview and, almost by default, commend the Christian faith.³⁸ Alexander Duff, highly influential in Calcutta and beyond, provided the ideology for this approach. Concentration on the upper classes was justified by a 'downward filtration theory' ('trickle down') which never worked. It merely created an English speaking Westernised elite who were themselves not in close contact with their compatriots and buttressed the authority of those who were already over privileged. In fact the methodology may have done a good deal of harm educationally, by sabotaging existing efforts in the direction of mass education and by leading to the comparative neglect of indigenous education.

Educational trends: (1) revolutionaries and conservatives

Here we must consider Pradhip Sinha's thesis that there was a reaction to the

³⁸ Contrast the SPG missionaries in Madras, who by no means gave the impression that the use of an Indian language, in this case Tamil, was inappropriate in Christian work. J. Brotherton in examining some of his colleagues - the Rev C. Aroolappen, Mr Regel and Savarimuttoo - for their proficiency in Tamil, used a well known Tamil Grammar (Naunool), the Cural (i.e. the Tirukural) an extract from the Tembavani (by Beschi), an extract from an ordination service for a priest, an extract from the Panchatambaram, a short exposition in Tamil of two of the Parables, a part of the eighth chapter of Romans - an interesting mixture of sources and cultures. (Letter, J. Brotherton to the Bishop of Madras, September 1850. USPG.D.4(A)36).

revolutionary aspects of the Indian Renaissance. He calls this 'the hardening of the crust'.³⁹ Christianity, he believed, was caught up in this process of rejection as were the neo-Hindu movements. Judith Brown also suggests that the 'tide of reform' was beginning to 'ebb' by the end of the 1830s. She puts this down to the departure of notable reformers (Bentinck, Trevelyan, Macaulay), the new demands on the exchequer made by frontier wars and the intractability of Indian society. However, there was no dramatic change of policy, just a gradual lessening of enthusiasm.⁴⁰ In terms of missionary education this would mean that the revolutionary phase: Duff, Carey etc. gave place to the institutional phase. This may be so, but I would like to suggest an alternative version. Duff, associated as he was with Renaissance figures such as Ram Mohun Roy and successful in winning converts, certainly gave the appearance of being part of 'the revolutionary aspects of the Renaissance'. Later historians of the history of Christianity in India, such as C.F.Andrews and Stephen Neill, put him in that category. On the other hand it is possible to divide Duff from his missionary colleagues, particularly those at Serampore. On this view the radicals were the vernacularists such as Carey and his associates. They identified the ordinary Bengali-speaking people as their target, rather than the wealthy and more privileged classes as in the case of Duff. Significantly, most of the early British missionaries had no high education, and were instinctively egalitarian in their attitudes. The Baptists again particularly come to mind. When the American

³⁹ P.Sinha, Nineteenth Century Bengal, Aspects of Social History (Calcutta, 1965) especially chapter 6 'The Bengal Victorians - A Community Between Change and Tradition in Nineteenth Century Bengal'.

⁴⁰ J.Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy (Oxford, 1994) p. 74.

Board sent its first missionaries to Burma in 1810 they were reminded that Burma was 'composed of our brethren, descended from the same common parents, involved in the consequences of the same fatal apostasy from God, and inhabiting the same world'.⁴¹ Not so Duff. What Duff was attempting to do was create a middle class (with appropriate genuflections towards 'trickle down' of course) and this was a conservative enterprise. This paralleled developments in Britain. The 'revolutionary phase' of British history, coming out of the French Revolution is rightly associated with men such as Tom Paine, William Cobbett and Francis Place. It fuelled the unrest of the 1820s and the demand for the Reform Bill in 1832, and culminated (in failure) with the Chartists in the 1840s. What triumphed instead was the middle class reformism of men like Robert Peel. This may seem a long way from India, but by shifting the emphasis from vernacular schools to English medium schools and colleges for the better off classes, a preference for middle-class values was being displayed. Indeed, as Ian Maxwell has insisted, Duff's whole educational enterprise always presupposed a quite specific relationship to the Imperial government and Duff always claimed that his work would contribute to political stability.⁴²

⁴¹ Cited in W.R.Hutchison, Errand to the World: American Protestant Missionary Thought and Foreign Missions (Chicago, 1987) p. 47.

⁴² Ian Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta' unpublished PhD thesis for the University of Edinburgh (1995) p.222.

Educational trends: (2) stifling of an indigenous Indian Christian movement

The concentration on English education as a means of undermining Indian culture, or, as the missionaries might say, the culture of Hinduism, may also explain the failure to produce, in many instances, a truly indigenous expression of Christianity. This meant that potential (and actual) converts had to choose on the one hand between their indigenous culture and spirituality which determined their Indianness and on the other their new religion. This was the more difficult because the Christianity they received was the product of a long tradition of 'Westernised' theological reflection, what Robin Boyd has called 'the Latin captivity of the church' ⁴³and also took a form which replicated in many instances the denominational differences which the missionaries carried with them. We shall see in chapter 6 how that SPG missionaries at Bishop's College and the CMS missionaries elsewhere in Calcutta occasionally reproduced the Evangelical - old High Church - Puseyite controversies of the home country, and that the Bishop's College professors could refer to the Baptists at Serampore as 'Anabaptists' and 'sectarians'. The authoritarian and paternalistic attitudes of the missionaries, not to mention their cultural imperialism, also hindered the Indian church from developing its own culturally appropriate patterns. Neither Bishop's College nor Serampore developed any true Indian leadership, and Duff's wholesale attack on Hinduism (for example in 'India and Indian Missions') came very near to a condemnation of all things Indian.⁴⁴

⁴³ See R. Boyd, India and the Latin Captivity of the Church (Cambridge, 1974).

⁴⁴ George Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1958 (Frankfurt, 1979) p. 65.

Educational trends (3): alliance with the government

The first generation of British evangelical missionaries, of all denominations, often fell foul of the colonial authorities, but as Victorian Britain sought to regain its religious dimension, the second and subsequent generations of missionaries experienced less and less tension between working for God's kingdom and for the interests of empire.⁴⁵ In the end they seemed to have found a similar reformist purpose, and the government even began to see the missionaries as allies.⁴⁶ For one thing the zeal of the government to reform, typified by the abolition of *sati*, but observable in so many ways from Bentinck onwards, expressed itself primarily in the educational sphere. The government shared with the missionaries the Enlightenment conviction that there were universal truths which could be recognised by men and women of good will who were not blinded by superstition and self interest. These could be disseminated by education. People like William Wilberforce in England, who sought to

⁴⁵ J. Van Den Berg, Constrained by Jesus' Love: An Enquiry into the Motives of the Missionary Awakening in Great Britain in the Period Between 1698 and 1815 (Kampen:Kok, 1956) p. 170f.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 144. It should be noted however that although the government and the missionaries were often seen to be allies during this period it is probable that their respective fields of operation were different. The missionaries were largely at work either among the depressed classes or among the 'educated classes'. The group which they scarcely touched were those with effective power: the rajas and princes and in the countryside the traditional (non-Westernised) landowners and commercial classes. Exactly the reverse was true for the British civil administration. See G.A.Oddie, 'Missionaries as Social Commentators: The Indian Case' in Bickers and Seton, Missionary Encounters pp 199-200.

influence the train of events in India during this period, were not just men of Christian conviction. They believed that 'the truth' was something that was held in trust by 'civilised' nations and which was owed to less fortunate peoples.

Furthermore, to impart this sort of enlightenment was a duty, something which must be actively pursued. Alexander Duff, in an article which charts the change of heart amongst British policy makers, quotes Wilberforce in arguments which Wilberforce put forward to the House of Commons in the debate on the renewal of the charter in 1793. To withhold truth from people was not toleration but a form of disdain, and if it was merely to avoid opposition also a form of cowardice. He drew an analogy with ancient philosophers who, believing differently themselves, and secretly despising common religion, nevertheless went along with it for reasons of expediency.⁴⁷ Of course Wilberforce and Duff, though not necessarily all British legislators and rulers of the period, believed that there was a connection between the way that Western nations had 'the truth' and the fact that they were Christian nations. As N. Daniel has explained: 'The new conviction of superiority arose from technologies and techniques of government, but it took the form of belief in Christian superiority. Very often the idea of a superior Christian civilisation turned into the idea of a civilisation that was superior because it was Christian. Superiority was explained as a result, not of new techniques, but of old morality; often as though the Christian morality had been necessary to achieve the techniques.'⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See Duff's article: 'Early or Exclusively Oriental Period of Government Education in Bengal', Calcutta Review Vol. 3, No 6 1845 pp. 211-236.

⁴⁸ N.Daniel, Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1966) p. 245.

Wilberforce was at one end of the spectrum. While the government after Bentinck was reformist it was also cautious. British administrators realised that, in the final analysis the acceptance of their rule depended on a commitment to the *status quo*. There had been many rulers of India, some of them 'foreigners', and their acceptance or otherwise largely depended on their willingness not to interfere. The government therefore wanted both to preserve traditional culture - in order not to antagonise its subjects - and at the same time to abolish, in certain instances, some practices considered objectionable to Westerners. It also wanted to win over the political classes who had lost their power. The provision of educational opportunities might provide them with some compensation. Another motive may have been the desire to secure less costly employees for the lower ranks in government service. Added to this was the feeling that Britain had a moral duty to provide education in the sense that the role of provider was a traditional one for Indian rulers.⁴⁹

Others have questioned whether the government was really 'reformist' at all, or was merely the old freebooting colonialist government wearing a respectable Victorian mask. According to Barun De, 'England's work in India' as loyalists used to call it, was not the peaceful introduction of the values and practices of modernity by a gradual process of example and education. This 'work' was rather a series of economic measures designed to undermine Indian production,

⁴⁹ S.Narullah and J.Naik, History of Education in India During the British Period (Bombay, 1951) p.107.

particularly in textiles, so as to benefit British industry; the political neutralisation of the so-called Native States in an attempt to render them impotent; and, finally, occasional and limited 'reforms' which included a certain amount of education, though even this was designed primarily to provide a class of government servants useful to the government and subservient to it. The overall result was predictably bad. In De's own words:

The educational institutions...led to the indirect transfer of modern, democratic, middle class and contemporary evangelical and utilitarian ideas, calling for progress in the metropolitan, capitalist context, but this modernisation was doomed to frustration in the, at best, petty-bourgeois subservience of the indigenous middle class in British India. This led to a bipolar structure of herrenvolk and alien races. The herrenvolk were not just the British but also the decaying feudal aristocracy and the rising middle class based on subaltern capital and ancillary professions of the empire.' ⁵⁰

De may have a point but the truth is probably more complex. It is true that the government could see a pragmatic purpose behind education, especially English education, but it is likely that they increasingly believed that they had a duty to promote education on humanitarian grounds. De may be forgetting that the policies of the Indian government mirrored developments in Britain, where

⁵⁰ Barun De, 'The Colonial Context of the Bengal Renaissance', in Philips and Wainwright eds., Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation (London, 1976).

serious thought was being given to the government's responsibility in educating 'the common people'. It is more complex in another sense, too. As Clive Whitehead has argued: 'most colonial schooling was conducted initially by missionaries who were primarily concerned with religious conversion. That inevitably led them to attempt to reform some of the more objectionable aspects of indigenous cultures, like polygamy, female circumcision and the power of witchcraft. (Whitehead is writing from an African perspective but the same might be true of India). In that sense the schools were culturally imperialistic i.e. they encouraged the adoption of Christian (European) moral ideals, but an important distinction needs to be drawn between the missionaries' motives, which were largely dictated by the desire to improve the quality of human life, and those attributed to colonial governments by neo-Marxists who argue that colonial educational policies were expressly designed to perpetuate European cultural and political hegemony. ⁵¹

As the years went by (up to 1857, that is) the government seemed to have become less cautious and largely abandoned its fears that reformist elements - missionaries often being foremost amongst them - would create a reaction among the Indian populace. It was also reflecting a growing enthusiasm for education in Britain. The Wood Despatch of 1854 (see chapter 7) as a result, reflected missionary ideas in many instances. Alexander Duff, in particular, while on extended furlough in England, was able to influence events. Duff

⁵¹ Clive Whitehead, 'British Colonial Education Policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?' in J.A.Mangan, ed., 'Benefits Bestowed?' Education and British Imperialism (Manchester, 1988) p.211.

sounded the usual notes: the inadvisability of purely secular schools and his expectations that when 'society was completely saturated with Christian knowledge' there would be conversions by the thousands.⁵² His opponents saw education as potentially politically subversive, significantly so perhaps in the light of the political unrest that was soon to envelop India. Duff's rejoinder was that Christianity was a conservative force. He did not fear evil political results if the extension of education was 'wisely, timeously (sic) united with the great improving, regulating, controlling and conservative power of Christianity'.⁵³ This looked forward to the post Mutiny debate as to whether Christianity was one of the causes of the troubles, as many in government believed, or whether, as the missionaries in general maintained, it was the lack of Christianity which had created the problem.

The main idea of the Wood Despatch - that education should be carried on largely by voluntary organisations, though with government support, was considered the only reasonable way forward. For the missionaries it meant, among other things, that they could continue religious education, including Bible instruction, in the classroom without interference. It also reflected what was happening in Britain where religious societies had pioneered primary education and had been the recipients of government aid since the Education Act of 1833. There were however weaknesses in the missionary position overall. In some obvious ways the Christian schools were antagonistic to Indian religion

⁵² J.N.Olgvie, The Apostles of India (London, 1915) p.411.

⁵³ G.Smith, Life of Duff (London, 1879) vol 2. p.244.

and custom. Would the government continue to support missionary schools if they felt that they were antagonising local elements? More importantly would the local people do so, particularly if more 'neutral' alternatives were available? This is the sort of warning signal it is easy to give in the hindsight provided by the events of 1857, but the heroic era characterised by men such as the Serampore Trio and Alexander Duff was coming to an end. The second half of the century saw no slackening of the missionary commitment to educational work, but it saw fewer successes.⁵⁴

'Civilising' or 'Christianising'

The themes and trends mentioned in this chapter are interdependent. The pervasive influence of Western Enlightenment thought deeply affected the educational policies and practices of the missionaries and, I suggest, not necessarily for the good. There are several areas which merit more discussion and analysis, notably the debate over 'civilising' or 'christianising' and therefore over evangelisation and education. This parallel vision led to a debate, primarily held in Scotland, among missionary thinkers as to the relationship between 'civilising' and christianising or evangelising and, if both, which came first? Of course the very form of the question, or the way that there was a division between the two, proclaimed the thought of the Enlightenment.⁵⁵ It was a

⁵⁴ S.Narullah and J.Naik, History of Education in India p. 165.

⁵⁵ This debate has recently been chronicled by Brian Stanley. See B.Stanley, Enlightenment and Mission: a Re-evaluation North Atlantic Missiology Project, Position Paper No. 11 (1996).

debate however which continued to be relevant to missionary education. As early as 1804 John Venn wrote that 'Man...cannot by education be made a real Christian; but by education he may be freed from prejudices and delivered from the dominion of dispositions highly favourable to temptation and sin.' ⁵⁶

As we have suggested, the modern missionary movement, whatever its relationship to the Enlightenment, was 'generally characterised by an unshakeable confidence in rational knowledge as an ally of Christian proclamation.' ⁵⁷ In explaining the origins of this approach Brian Stanley takes us back to Aristotle, noting that the Europeans believed in their 'intrinsic superiority' because of their 'supposedly unrivalled capacity to "improve" the natural world by technical innovation.' This provides just one example of the way that the missionaries were happy to appeal to 'rational knowledge'. The superiority of Western science was an indication of the superiority of Western thought and therefore of Christianity.⁵⁸ This brings us directly to the debate in missionary circles between 'civilising' and 'Christianising' and in particular to the well known controversy amongst the Scottish missionary thinkers over this issue. This debate, of so much importance for educational policy in India, has been carefully chronicled by Ian Maxwell, and it is his account which is largely

⁵⁶ J. Venn 'Charity Schools', *Christian Observer*, September 1804, p. 542 cited in Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* p. 123.

⁵⁷ Stanley, *Enlightenment and Mission* p. 4. See also Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* pp.69, 123-5.

⁵⁸ Perhaps the missionaries in question were not fully aware that in doing this they were appealing not so much to Christianity but to what Ernest Gellner calls 'a secular, non-religious variant' to Christianity. (See E.Gellner, *Postmodernism, Reason and Religion* (London and New York, 1992) p.58.

followed here. Maxwell's thesis carefully examines the background to the Church of Scotland's mission in Calcutta.⁵⁹

The Scottish debate was about which came first in the propagation of the gospel in other cultures: 'biblical and apostolic preaching' or 'the communication of the civilising rationality assumed by many to be essential to a full comprehension of the Christian faith'.⁶⁰ The leading thinker behind the latter view was George Hill, Professor of Divinity at St Andrews from 1788 to 1807. Hill brought Calvinist theology within the confines of the rationality of the Scottish Enlightenment. Christianity was understood as a superstructure founded on the basis of natural religion. The aim was to demonstrate Christianity's rational superiority and so reveal its superstructural status.⁶¹ It is easy to see how this could influence the debate about the relevant target for education. If the communication of the gospel involved an appeal to accepted standards of rationality through argument and debate, then it was reasonable to narrow the field to those within cultures who could make use of reasoned discourse, i.e. the educated elites. Learning was the key, the motor of change.

⁵⁹ I. Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta' unpublished PhD thesis for the University of Edinburgh (1995). Also, I. Maxwell, Enlightenment and Mission: Alexander Duff and the Early Years of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta (Position Paper No 2. of the North Atlantic Missiology Project, Cambridge, 1996) and I. Maxwell, Civilisation or Christianity: The Scottish Debate on Mission Methods, 1750-1835 (Position Paper Number 12 of the North Atlantic Missiology Project, Cambridge, 1996).

⁶⁰ Maxwell, Civilisation or Christianity p. 1.

⁶¹ Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' pp. 79-81.

The aim was to produce an elite within society who could lead the way.

Providence was strongly emphasised in all this. This was important as far as the timing of the Scottish mission was concerned. According to received ideas (amongst the Moderates) a society was providentially prepared so that it became a civilised society and when this happened it was ready for the appearance of Christianity. Only the moment had to be awaited.⁶² The Great Debate between the Moderates and the Evangelicals in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1796, for example, was primarily about timing rather than whether missions themselves were a good thing. This was not just temporising. It was believed that it was possible to discern clear evidences of God at work in the historical process. This enabled the Scots to join with others, the Bengal Asiatic Society in Calcutta and the Baptists at Serampore in feeling that they were witnessing in the first decades of the nineteenth century, a particularly propitious time in the history of Eastern India.⁶³ John Inglis, the famous minister of Greyfriars in Edinburgh and Alexander Duff's mentor, in deciding that the time had come to start an educational mission in India was influenced by reports from James Bryce, the first Church of Scotland chaplain in Calcutta, and by the publication of Charles Lushington's History of Charitable Institutions in Calcutta in 1824. Both Bryce and Lushington claimed that there

⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 85-6 and Maxwell, Civilisation or Christianity pp. 5-8.

⁶³ A little later, in Agra, Carl Pfander, the CMS missionary, was convinced that he was about to witness the conversion of the Islamic world in his own lifetime. Like the Scots he also believed that the educated classes would be the intermediaries through whom the truth would filter down to the people. See Powell, Muslims and Missionaries p.157.

was a fast growing demand for Western education. The point is not simply that Inglis saw this as an 'opportunity'. He believed that society in Calcutta was reaching a moment when it was ripe for the next stage in the Providentialist pattern.⁶⁴

John Inglis and his fellow Moderate theorists in effect won the day as far as the mission policy of the Church of Scotland was concerned. It was Inglis who promoted the idea of an Institute of higher learning in Calcutta and he did so on classical rational Calvinist lines: mission should give priority to learning and education in order to hasten the society towards the historical moment of acceptance of Christianity. Also it was no coincidence that Alexander Duff was the chosen instrument. Maxwell's thesis thoroughly revises the notion, largely put about by Duff's Victorian biographer, George Smith, that Duff was primarily influenced by his Evangelical upbringing and his Evangelical mentors, particularly Thomas Chalmers. By contrast Maxwell puts much more emphasis on the influence of Duff's education at St Andrew's. This produced a missionary who was a rational Calvinist in theology and a Moderate in church politics, though someone who needed to retain his Evangelical connections.⁶⁵ That is why Duff, as we have seen, quite deliberately concentrated on the Calcutta elite - it was not just an accident that these were his first students - and continued

⁶⁴ For a detailed account of these events see Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' pp. 121-41.

⁶⁵ Maxwell's thesis gives a detailed account of Duff's education at St Andrews. Both his time pursuing an Arts course at the United Colleges (1821-5) and at the Divinity College, St Mary's, from 1825-9, seemed to have decisively directed him towards rational Calvinism. The Evangelical Thomas Chalmers, though greatly admired by Duff, offered little countervailing influence. See *ibid.*, p. 90.

to advocate this strategy for the rest of his life. The fact that he was able to prove that his students could produce work equal to the best in Scottish universities only encouraged him to think he was on the right track, as did the first conversions. These were largely among the students from the Hindu College who attended Duff's extra-curricular lectures.⁶⁶

Duff's success in Calcutta had a profound effect. In Scotland it was important because, together with Duff's masterly presentation of his strategy after he returned for furlough in 1834, it won the day for the Moderates. Duff re-immersed himself in the civilisation versus evangelisation debate and though evidently still widely popular with the Evangelicals, in effect supported the Moderate line. Rather surprisingly he succeeded in keeping everybody happy. The leading Evangelical of the day, Thomas Chalmers, commended Duff and suggested that 'those of shrewd, but withal of secular intelligence' may condemn the 'gospel' side of the educational work that Duff was doing. Those, on the other hand, 'of weak and drivelling piety' may condemn the science, the geometry, the economics and the strange philosophy. ⁶⁷ Duff's pattern became the accepted pattern for the Church of Scotland and Duff-style institutions, sponsored by the Church of Scotland, appeared in due course in Bombay, Madras and Nagpur. In India many other missions followed Duff's example. The

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 162-6.

⁶⁷ Smith, Life of Duff vol. 1 p. 385.

CMS, SPG, LMS, American Presbyterians, American Methodists were just some examples. Duff's ideology also prevailed. Though other missions may not have thought out their strategy as carefully as the Church of Scotland, there was, in due course, a general conviction, which became almost a consensus, that higher education was a key area for missionary involvement.

At the time of Duff's great initial success, there were in fact some voices raised against him, but they were mostly in India. One of Duff's most impressive expositions of his educational approach was given at the Church of Scotland's General Assembly in 1835. This included an attack on vernacular preaching by missionaries as a method (in India) on the grounds that it produced few results as compared to the presentation of 'rational evidences' (here Duff described his lectures to the students of the Hindu College).⁶⁸ Duff's polemic, as we have seen, was very well received in Scotland but in India he was challenged by J.C.Marshman in an article in the *Friend of India*.⁶⁹ Marshman's approach was that the Holy Spirit could convince a person of the truth of Christianity even if that person were illiterate or totally 'uncivilised'. This meant that education might provide an opportunity for evangelism but was not an essential part of the process.⁷⁰ Marshman had other criticisms to make,⁷¹ but this was the most

⁶⁸ See Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' pp. 180-3.

⁶⁹ See M.Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 (Oxford, 1972) pp. 254-5.

⁷⁰ See further *ibid.*, p. 272.

⁷¹ Marshman believed that Duff's illustrations drawn from the Hindu College were too atypical to be useful; also that Duff represented Hinduism as about to

important one from the educational point of view. Marshman felt that education was useful but not essential in the missionary task. Duff felt that it was *the way* ahead.

Duff was also challenged by John Wilson on the issue of vernacular versus English education. Wilson, on hearing the news of Duff's success in Scotland in 1835 responded by suggesting that 'some of his views on the economics of Christian mission are, in my opinion erroneous.' What Wilson then singled out was that Duff ought not to have advocated his Institute by 'disparaging the direct preaching of the gospel to the natives in their own language...and the general education of the natives through the medium of their own tongues...the readiest key to their hearts.' Ian Maxwell characterises this as a typical disagreement between a Moderate (Duff) and an Evangelical (Wilson).⁷² This may well have been involved, but the phrase underlined by Wilson has to do not with preaching but with vernacular education. Wilson's real disagreement was not over using education as such, but over the question as to how it could be most effectively applied. Wilson, himself, was to disagree with, and almost get the sack from, one of his own local committees, because of his preference for vernacular education.⁷³

collapse, when in fact it was a highly complex cultural phenomenon which had considerable resilience. See Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' pp. 183-5 and Laird, Missionaries and Education pp. 254-6).

⁷² Maxwell, Enlightenment and Mission pp. 1-2.

⁷³ See above p.49.

Duff never gave up his belief in the methodology he developed during his first four years in India. Later in his book India and Indian Mission, published in 1839, Duff struck the same notes, while artfully adding material that would please his Scottish audience: the 'need' of India, portrayed as India sunk in ignorance and vice, and frequent references to the importance of gaining conversions. His disciples – Murray Mitchell in Pune, Stephen Hislop in Nagpur, John Anderson and William Miller in Madras developed Duff's themes. This meant, in fact, that Duff's Moderate argument that 'civilising' should come first largely won the day. This insight has been somewhat obscured by Duff's identification as essentially an Evangelical. Ian Maxwell has now largely dispelled this idea, by disassociating Duff from his Evangelical 'roots' once thought to be so crucial in his formation. Despite the words of commendation by Thomas Chalmers, quoted above, the differences between the standpoint of Duff and Chalmers illustrate this. In the great Scottish debate Chalmers held a mid-way view. He believed that all humankind possessed 'natural virtue' on which the Holy Spirit operated through the proclamation of the gospel. This 'natural virtue' (conscience, or an innate moral sense) was 'the portable evidence of Christianity' which he contrasted to the rational evidences so beloved of the Moderates. Hence preaching need not wait for the soil to be prepared by civilisation. (This was essentially J.C.Marshman's position as mentioned above.) This did not mean that education was not part of the process of Christianisation. Chalmers, like other Scottish evangelicals, was influenced by the success of the work of the Society in Scotland for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SSPCK) in the Scottish Highlands. There the formula was itinerant

preaching, local schools and the distribution of the Bible. Also it was confidently believed that this method could be transferred overseas.⁷⁴ But Chalmers did not therefore believe that proclamation of the gospel must wait upon education, or that civilisation preceded Christianity.⁷⁵

The SSPCK work in the Highlands raises another point. It was a work that concentrated on vernacular schools; the education was not at all intended for an elite. In this respect the SSPCK schools were closer to those of the Baptists and SPG in India than they were to Duff's Institute and schools like it. Duff in theory subscribed to the SSPCK methods,⁷⁶ with an emphasis on Higher Education because he wanted to provide an indigenous agency which would make the threefold method: schools, preaching and Bible distribution possible.⁷⁷ In practice, however, he went in a very different direction. This may have been partly because he was lured, as Brian Stanley has suggested, by the demand for English education in Calcutta,⁷⁸ but Duff at heart was a Moderate,

⁷⁴ For an account of the work of the SSPCK and other related missions in the Scottish Highlands see D.E.Meek, 'Protestant Missions and the Evangelisation of the Scottish Highlands, 1700-1850' International Bulletin of Missionary Research Vol 21, No. 2 pp. 67-72.

⁷⁵ B.Stanley, Enlightenment and Mission pp. 12-14.

⁷⁶ Duff, India and Indian Mission pp. 261-9.

⁷⁷ Duff makes this point in Indian and Indian Missions but in a critique of his thought there, William Campbell, a long serving missionary to India, attacked Duff's disregard for the vernacular and pointed out that that his bringing forward of Gaelic to support the Anglicising scheme was inappropriate, in the light of the way that Gaelic had been marginalised in Scotland. (See Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' p. 216.

⁷⁸ B.Stanley, Enlightenment and Mission p. 14.

as his performance at the General Assembly in 1835 clearly demonstrated.

This 'top down' approach was in fact in direct contrast to the SSPCK model.

Brian Stanley notes this when he says, 'The success of Duff's method ensured that it was his highly literary variant of the classic SSPCK missionary recipe, rather than Chalmers' more populist conjunction of preaching with elementary Christian education, that set the pattern for much subsequent Scottish mission in India and elsewhere.'⁷⁹ Stanley, however, as we have noted, attributes the contrast to the specific circumstances of early nineteenth century Bengal.

As we shall see in chapter five the English missionaries, originally more concerned with raising up an indigenous ministry, beginning with elementary schools, were often subverted by Scottish influence. Serampore was teaching George Hill's 'Evidences' by the time it came back into the BMS fold in 1852.⁸⁰ The LMS was deeply influenced by Scottish theory through its first secretary, James Love, a Presbyterian and a Moderate.⁸¹ A countervailing ideology was provided initially by the humble origins of many of the early non-conformists - Carey, Marshman and Ward are examples - but as we have seen this did not last.

It is clear therefore that this long and sometimes complex debate had to do in a

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁸⁰ See below p. 126.

⁸¹ Stanley, Enlightenment and Mission p. 15.

very specific way with the determination of educational policy. If 'civilising' was deemed to be the first necessary step in missionary endeavour then it would seem logical to begin with education, universally agreed to be the primary 'civilising' agent. If evangelisation was to be the key which opened the door, then schools and colleges should be given, at best, second place after evangelism, unless it could be shown that they were the only means by which the local population could be 'reached' in the first place. The idea of 'raising up a native agency' and its close relative, the general education of the new Christian community, could perhaps be seen as giving value to both goals.

The latter view, the primacy of evangelism, remained (at least for the first half of the nineteenth century) *theoretically* the missionary position. It was still widely held, certainly back in the home countries, that the most important job that the missionary could do was to preach, and this meant preaching in the vernacular. The continuing popularity of this model was one of Duff's difficulties when he returned to Scotland to do deputation work.⁸² Schools and colleges were popular because they were evangelistic agencies themselves: they really did bring the missionaries into contact with the local population in a way that no other method did. Secondly 'raising up a native agency' was intended to provide a workforce which would take on the task of evangelisation: this was a commonplace in missionary thinking. Thirdly newly converted Christians were obviously potential missionaries to their own people, but they were also in some

⁸² Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background...' p. 175.

senses the missionaries' responsibility; giving them educational opportunities seemed a duty as well as an opportunity. Fourthly, despite what the missionaries said, their underlying assumption was that a sound Christian education would, of itself, incline students towards Christianity. This was because they believed that they represented a civilisation (both Western and Christian) which, by virtue of its superiority would inevitably undermine the cultural, and therefore religious, assumptions of their students.

For the second half of the century and beyond, the first argument - that schools led to good contacts and therefore to converts - became less popular, particularly among those who were working in secondary and higher education. There was plenty of contact, and this was still valued, but too few converts, to be able to claim that the schools and colleges were effective evangelistic agencies. The second argument, 'raising a native agency' was never lost sight of, and became increasingly important towards the very end of the long nineteenth century, while the education of Christian children seemed more pressing when it became evident that the majority of new Christians was coming from the socially less privileged communities. It was the fourth idea, however, which gained the pre-eminence, at least in secondary and higher education. The 'diffusion' theory became the orthodoxy. This receives further analysis in chapter 8, but two main reasons may be suggested: firstly, because of the failure to gain conversions and secondly because of a theological shift of emphasis which made gaining conversions seem less urgent.

Despite the missionary rhetoric, the argument that civilising precedes

evangelising actually won the day, certainly for those involved in higher education, but also to some extent for those primarily concerned with the education of Christians. This had serious consequences. In particular, the turning away from the vernacular schooling of humble people to an English medium education for the higher classes - a product of the pragmatism of the Scottish Enlightenment and a belief in the superiority of Western civilisation - was a mistake, in the light of long term missionary aims to build the church in India. The unhealthy reliance on a 'trickle down' theory, the buttressing of the privileges of the privileged, and the deflection from the mass indigenous vernacular education, did not really serve the missionaries' purpose.

The results were predictably bad for the missionary enterprise and perhaps for the nation as a whole. As far as the Indian church was concerned there was little progress made in raising up a native agency. Serampore was not much use as a means of strengthening the vernacular village churches. Bishop's College failed in much the same way. Duff's schools and Colleges perhaps never had that purpose in the first place. An indigenous Christian style, either in church practice or in theology, did not emerge. Little work of this sort was done in the Christian educational institutions and many of the intelligentsia whether Christian or otherwise were English speaking and Westernised. Perhaps the only beneficiary from the Anglicisation of education was the government. Even some in government came to regret it. When the national movement at the end of the century began to recruit its shock troops from the English medium schools and colleges, it was not uncommon for the whole process of higher

education for Indians to come under criticism.⁸³

Finally, in this survey of missionary education, it would be fair to say that the period up to 1857 in India was characterised by significant but not cataclysmic events. For the missionaries the terms of the renewal of the Charter Act in 1813 were important and led to the subsequent growth of missionary activity.

Educationally there was the decision in favour of English medium education in 1835 and the Wood Despatch in 1854. Culturally the Renaissance faded to be replaced by 'Victorian' conservatism.

None of these matched up with the major political and cultural developments of the second half of our study. The 1857 Revolt changed a great deal for all concerned, and the relationship between government and missionaries became more tense. The church grew, but only slowly. Subsequently the 'mass movements' created a shift away from the old heartlands of Bengal and northern India towards tribal and lower caste communities and this challenged the conventional educational perspectives. Above all, the growth of the neo-Hindu movement and the rise of Indian nationalism created a fresh context for Christian education, a context which threw up new and difficult challenges.

These events 'overtaken' the missionary educators, who responded to them as best they could. However, before describing this process it will be necessary to relate the experiences of the Baptists at Serampore and the missionaries associated with Bishop College and its schools. They sought to fulfil the original

⁸³ See e.g. p. 394 below.

purpose of the missionary educators – raising a native agency and laying the foundations of an indigenous Indian church – and largely failed. This will be the subject of the next two chapters.

Chapter 4: The Baptists and Serampore

The Baptists, led by William Carey and his close associates William Ward and Joshua Marshman, were pioneers in missionary education. From quite early in his missionary service (1800) Carey established his headquarters at the Danish enclave at Serampore. Also from early days education was 'a missionary tool'. Carey reckoned schools to be 'one of the most effectual means of spreading the light of the gospel'. He ranked the educational method devised by Joseph Lancaster ¹ as one of the three 'powerful engines', alongside missionary and Bible societies to bless the world.² By the time of the founding of the famous Serampore College in 1818 there was already a network of native schools in and around Serampore. According to the First Serampore Schools Report in 1817, in the course of some fifteen months from 1816-17, 103 elementary schools with 6,703 pupils were established.³ No lesser figure than James Mill commented appreciatively on this educational effort after he had read Marshman's 'Hints Relative to Native Schools, together with the Outline of an

¹ Schools known as National Schools (i.e. schools of the National Society of the Church of England) were launched in 1811 to propagate the schemes of Andrew Bell for cheap popular training in basic skills through monitors (senior pupils who passed on their lessons to the younger ones). A parallel organisation was the British and Foreign Schools Society founded in 1814 to support educational plans already begun by Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker. British schools also initially adopted the monitorial system. See M. Sturt, The Education of the People: A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century (London, 1967) pp. 21-7.

² B. Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1792-1992 (Edinburgh, 1992) p. 51.

³ M. A. Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 (Oxford, 1972) p. 72.

Institution for their Extension and Management'.⁴

Responses to culture

In terms of their attitude to culture and education, the Baptists might be best described, as we have seen, as 'Vernacularists', in an attempt to distinguish them from both the Orientalists and the Anglicists, the 'parties' which fought out the battle over education in the early 1830s.⁵ Carey and his co-workers were primarily interested in the *contemporary* culture and especially the study of local languages rather than the cultural heritage of the past. Indeed they are to this day widely praised for the work they did in establishing and propagating the Bengali language.⁶ Their theory was that the most significant aspect of the European Renaissance was not its classical revival but the development of vernacular literatures in Europe. This they interpreted as indispensable to the progress of modern European nations. In the same way a revival of vernacular education and learning would be much more important to any possible 'Renaissance' in India than the study of the past. Again, they were not against the introduction of Western knowledge – indeed Christianity would have been part of this – but they believed that the transmission of ideas would have to be through the vernaculars. If scholars wished to study English they would provide

⁴ W.H.Burston, ed., James Mill on Education (Cambridge, 1969) pp. 108-111.

⁵ See above pp.46-9.

⁶ D. Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: the Dynamics of Indian Modernisation 1773-1835 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969) pp. 157-8, citing 'Progress of Events in Europe', Dig dursan V (August 1818) p. 204.

for them. But the idea that English might be a universal medium of instruction was, in their view, nonsensical, wrong, and impossible of realisation.⁷

Joshua Marshman, the leader of the Mission's educational enterprise and a schoolmaster himself, was a keen vernacularist. He laid great stress on the communication of the gospel through the local language, Bengali, on the translation of the Scriptures into local languages, and on education through the medium of Bengali. Essentially Marshman saw education as an empowerment. It was how he had experienced it in his own life. Coming, as he did, from a humble background he had enriched his life immeasurably by his own hard won learning. He believed that others should have the same opportunity. What concerned him and his colleagues was that to be an educated Indian you must be a Hindu, usually of high caste. One of the aims of Baptist education, and this applied particularly to the Serampore College as we shall see, was that Christian Indians should be able to debate with the learned men of Benares on terms of equality. As a result there was emphatically no intention to Anglicise students, rather to make them more effective within their own culture.

Along with this went, at least initially, ⁸ a sensitivity to the material culture, a determination not to 'Anglicise' in another sense. John Wenger, a Baptist missionary, recalling his early days in India wrote:

⁷ Laird, Missionaries and Education pp. 94-5.

⁸ Serampore College was rather grand, even grandiose, and was perhaps not in keeping with the Baptists' avowed intention of adopting a style appropriate to the culture. There was a good deal of criticism on this account. See Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 148.

At Dhaukota Mr Pearce had established a small boarding school for boys, which pleased me much, as being more adapted to the circumstances of the people than any plan which had previously been adopted. About a dozen boys were boarded and instructed gratuitously in the house of their native Christian leader, whilst the parents had to supply them with clothes. Thus they remained in their native village and were taught through the medium of their mother tongue, thereby escaping the danger of being spoiled in a city and puffed up with a smattering of English.⁹

We must not overemphasise the Baptist affirmation of the local culture, however. The missionaries' reason for becoming conversant with the language and customs of Bengal was so that they might more effectively propagate Christianity. The 'Renaissance' that they were looking for was conversion of Hindus and Muslims to the Christian faith. They saw the local religious cultures as their target, and even the social issues they took up, issues in which they were supported by thoughtful Hindu reformers, were pursued in the spirit of antagonism to the local religion. William Ward's A View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos, for example, published in 1811, threw a decidedly unfavourable light on Hindu culture,¹⁰ and he in turn influenced writers on India such as Charles Grant and James Mill. The Baptists' interest

⁹ Angus Library, Rev. John Wenger, *Reminiscences of my Indian Life, 1839-54* (unpublished).

¹⁰ William Ward, Account of the Writings, Religion and Manners of the Hindoos 4 vols, (Serampore, 1811). See, for example, volume 1 p. xx where Ward claims that 'Hindoos have sunk to the lowest depths of human depravity.'

in local language and culture can certainly not be seen as an accommodation with Hinduism. Even the teaching of Sanskrit (at Serampore College) was not really a gesture of homage to India's past. It was primarily a recognition of its strategic importance for learning and understanding Indian vernaculars. It may also have been a declaration that the sacred language, hitherto the preserve of an elite, should be available to everybody. As has been said, Marshman and his colleagues wanted to give their students tools that would give them status and dignity and would equip them as future preachers of the gospel to their own people. Though the Serampore trio are admired to this day by historians of the rise of Indian nationalism such as George Thomas (who in general are critical of other missionaries as agents of imperialism) ¹¹ this should not be allowed to confuse us as to their clear missionary purpose.

It can be said, however, that the Baptists, despite their evangelistic zeal, were not trying to replace local culture in a thorough-going way. It was more a question of transforming (rather than replacing) the local culture, with the language learning and cultural expertise as a means to that end.¹²

¹¹ G.Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1950 (Frankfurt, 1979) pp. 25-27.

¹² There is an interesting parallel here with the attitudes of John Wilson of Bombay. According to George Smith, Wilson's biographer, Wilson believed that a 'purified Orientalism' (George Smith, Life of Wilson (London, 1879) p. 79) - was a suitable instrument to be used for the spread of the gospel - an idea that would have been quite foreign to Wilson's fellow Church of Scotland missionary, Duff. Wilson was not all that sanguine that if it came to a cultural battle between Hindu culture and Western culture, Western culture would come out on top (ibid., pp. 248-9 (note 1). As a result his policy was basically 'both and' rather than 'either or'. He was a proponent of the teaching of both English literature and science and oriental literature and science, and to the same

Translation work and printing - also a very important part of the Baptists' work - may indeed be seen as beneficial to the local cultures.¹³ The Bengali newspapers and the production by the Serampore press of a version of the Ramayana were seen in that light at the time. Yet again it must not be forgotten that the translation work was largely given over to the translation of the Bible, a book the spread of which was not at all intended to be friendly to local cultures. It is worth recalling that the Serampore press was in great trouble with the government on one occasion for printing a religious tract critical of the Muslim faith.¹⁴ Similar printed attacks on Hinduism were undoubtedly produced.

While the vernacularists were not necessarily 'on the side of Hindu culture', they were not on the side of the Anglicists either. David Kopf describes them as 'popular culture Orientalists'.¹⁵ He felt that William Carey would have probably been the leader of the attack on Macaulayism had he not died (in 1834) just before the Orientalist versus Anglicist controversy came to a head. Carey's

people. He bewailed the fact that, all too often, the literati of the two traditions were unable to communicate. This resulted, he believed, in a blockage of useful knowledge flowing in from the West, or, to put it another way, he felt that Eastern wisdom could prove beneficial if it were corrected by outside influences. (See the letter to Dr Brunton *ibid.*, p. 248 and also pp. 319-320.) Elsewhere he eloquently defended the need for expert knowledge of the local religions as a necessary background for Christian work. (*ibid.*, p. 330).

¹³ See e.g. Lamin Sanneh, Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture (Maryknoll, NY., 1989) pp. 101-5.

¹⁴ N.Daniel. Islam, Europe and Empire (Edinburgh, 1996) p. 250.

¹⁵ D.Kopf, British Orientalism and the Bengal renaissance: the Dynamics of Indian Modernisation, 1773-1835 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979) p. 251.

student Brian Hodgson, the Resident in Nepal, took upon himself Carey's mantle when he attacked the Anglicists in the missionary magazine The Friend of India. Hodgson wanted to see a popular education programme through the vernaculars and, like the Seramporists generally, criticised the elitist tendencies of the educational reforms based on English medium education. They were sceptical of the 'downward filtration' theory, fearful that the Oriental classics would be neglected altogether and scornful of the 'Roman letter scheme' which planned to introduce the Roman alphabet in place of local scripts.¹⁶ There is an interesting cross reference to this debate in Bishop Pickett's book about the mass movements produced a century later. Pickett considers the (educational) advantages of teaching the Roman alphabet but admits that 'it has tended to accentuate the division between Christians and non-Christians in matters which religious principles are not involved. It has consequently ...been used by opponents as a weapon of attack on Christianity as a denationalising and divisive force.'¹⁷

On the question of vernacular versus English medium education, it may be that Hodgson and like-minded vernacularists were already fighting a losing battle by the 1830s. Historians have tended to date the introduction of English from the Macaulay, Duff era, (the 1830s) but long before this date the Baptists themselves had realised that there was a genuine demand for English education

¹⁶ See Laird, Missionaries and Education pp. 234-6. It is significant that the 'Roman letter scheme' was supported by the Calcutta Baptists, an indication that they were more Anglicist than Serampore. See below p.122.

¹⁷ J.W.Pickett, Christian Mass Movements in India (New York, 1933) p. 276.

and had responded to this by providing it, perhaps as a means of survival. In 1817 James Penney, a BMS missionary, saw this quite clearly:

The School [the Benevolent Institution in Calcutta] admits any who may choose to come tho' it was principally intended for the Roman Catholic children whose condition as to knowledge and manners is of the most deplorable nature. Bengalees object to mingle with any but their own peculiar cast, this in some measure is dying away, they see that the Portuguese by having a trifling acquaintance with English do obtain from Europeans the most respectable situations as Writers etc so that I have in the school Mussulman Bengalees, Portuguese, Armenians and Jews etc all desirous of reaping instruction which to them is considered as a medium to wealth.¹⁸

George Pearce, another Baptist, writing from Doorgapore in 1827 also understood the law of supply and demand. He had opened a school but

In the vicinity of Doorgapore there are four schools belonging to the Bishop's College, each of which contains about one hundred children, besides which there are several Native schools in the neighbourhood. To collect children therefore for the sake of Bengalee instruction only would have been a difficult if not impossible thing. I therefore intend to combine English with Bengalee, and this will prove to be a sufficient inducement

¹⁸ Angus Library, James Penney to Rev James Palmer, 27 May, 1817.

for hundreds of children to come if I could take them.

The tone of the letter was perhaps a little defensive because it was BMS policy to conduct primary education in the vernacular. He mitigated his offence by taking a fashionable swipe at the Hindoo College and 'secular' English education. Thus:

The plan of teaching English and Bengalee is I am aware, objected (sic) by some...A measure of this kind seems the more necessary when it is considered that the boys in the Hindoo College, while by means of European Science they become disquieted with the absurdities of heathenism, are without a guide either of books or teachers to lead them to the Author of Salvation.¹⁹

Three years later Pearce complained that there were not enough missionaries for 'native work'.

I can now with some degree of force show you the necessity of sending out more missionaries for Calcutta for native work...there remains only myself and Mr Carapace (?) with one or two native brethren to engage in Bengalee work in Calcutta and the adjacent country in which there are in the lowest computation a million souls.²⁰

¹⁹ Angus Library, George Pearce to Rev John Dyer at B.M.S., London, from Doorgapore, 14 November, 1827.

²⁰ Angus Library, Letter from Pearce to Dyer, April 10, 1830, Chitpore.

One of the reasons for this was that so many of the missionaries were already engaged in ministries in English. Pearce seemed oblivious of the fact that by opening an English medium school he was contributing to the same trend.

Despite this natural response to the demands of the hour, in general the Baptists remained vernacularists, even to the extent of attempting to make a stand on the necessity of vernacular (as against English) preaching. John Wenger in his 'Reminiscences' provides an insight:

In the rainy season of 1841 about the commencement of August Dr and Mrs Judson came to Calcutta on account of the health of their children...He congratulated me upon being able to preach in Bengali and took the opportunity to warn me against English preaching as being likely to draw me away from native work. He told me that he had not preached once in English since he had been in Burmah excepting a single ordination service and that he never meant to do it, because he had come out for the heathen, who were sitting in darkness, not for the English speaking Christians who possessed the light. He said that there was an English church at Maulmain but rather than preach to that church, if it had no pastor, he would urge upon its numbers the duty of mutual exhortation and if they could not or would not exhort one another he would rather let the church fall to pieces (which in that case it would amply deserve) than to be induced to deviate from his resolution. Much as I admired Dr Judson it appeared to me that this was

a narrow minded view.²¹

Aims of Baptist education: (1) Finance

If the Baptists did not join the Anglicists like Duff in their wholehearted crusade against Indian culture, what did they expect to achieve through education? What task was the tool expected to perform? In a very small number of cases they saw schools as a source of income. James Thomas, for example, wrote to John Dyer at BMS headquarters in 1828 that he had hopes that the school which he and his colleague James Penney were jointly running in Calcutta would provide a sufficient income for him to support himself and hence make it unnecessary for him to be dependent on Mission funds.²² In informing the mission that this had not worked out and that he had had to quit i.e. close down the school, he showed no particular concern that an educational opportunity had been lost. This, however, is atypical. In by far the majority of cases making money was not by any means the chief purpose of missionary schools and colleges. In fact the missions were again and again prepared to put money into schools which could not pay for themselves. For every letter like the above suggesting that a school might be a useful source of income there are a thousand in missionary archives asking for financial support on the grounds that the school or college was doing invaluable work but could not, at least could not yet, be expected to be self-supporting.

²¹ Angus Library, John Wenger, 'Reminiscences of my Indian Life, 1839-54' (unpublished).

²² Angus Library, James Thomas to John Dyer, the BMS secretary, in London, 12 March, 1828.

Aims of Baptist education: (2) Conversions

A second, more predictable, aim was the winning of converts to Christianity. Here the Baptists shared a common purpose with other missionary schools. Also, like them, they often had to keep a precarious balance between viability and effectiveness as missionary agencies. Success in gaining converts or even the attempt to do so might seriously jeopardise the running of their schools.²³ Jabez Carey defended himself against his father's strictures that he was not doing enough to 'publish the gospel' on precisely these grounds.

In the school at Poker there are about 40 children who are going on pretty well. In the school here (Ajmere) sometimes 25, sometimes 30, sometimes 40 attend but I find it very difficult to get them to attend

²³ In theory Alexander Duff had a clear policy of using Christian education as an instrument of direct evangelism and conversion. 'In every system of Christian education, the making known of Jesus Christ as the Almighty Saviour of lost sinners, constitutes the most vital part of it' was Duff's typically forthright claim. (Alexander Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1839) p. 186) We need to remember, however, that these words were written (in *India and Indian Missions*) for a British, largely Evangelical, audience. Wilson of Bombay took the same line, when he described his English College opened in 1835 as 'An agency for evangelising the educated native youth no less than as a means of disintegrating the old faith of Persia and India' (Smith, The Life of John Wilson p. 245). To be fair to them, both were prepared to pursue this policy even to the apparent detriment of the educational institutions they had established. Wilson was particularly interested in evangelistic (and educational) work amongst the Parsis, and in fact a number of the Parsi students were converted. However this only revealed the tensions of being both a missionary and an educator. After the baptism of Dhanjibhai Nowroji, a Parsi convert, in 1839, numbers in Wilson's College dropped from 285 to 75, with every single Parsi student being withdrawn (ibid., p.235). Later on he was to have more trouble, this time over a Brahmin convert (ibid., p. 393).

regularly and what is worse they generally leave the school entirely after they have been in it for 4 or five months. You wish me my dear Father to publish the gospel among the natives here, but I am sorry to say that were I to do it publickly I should very soon lose my school and never get the natives to come near me. The natives here think that I am sent to take away their cast and are therefore very jealous about it...I lost sometime ago a number of children by giving them some copies of the gospel of Matthew in the school to use as school books and one or two opposition schools were very soon set up in consequence to take away the children from me. To keep the children therefore I was obliged to take back the books; at Poker however they are used still without offence.²⁴

There were other difficulties. A lack of Christian staff meant that no more than a formal knowledge of Christian teaching could be given. Conversions were not a practicable aim. The Baptist W.B.Symes reported in 1839 on his inspection of a village school:

At 4 o clock we visited Lakhyantipus a village 3 or 4 miles distant from Massingdaschok. Here we have a school attended by 50 to 60 children. I examined 45 of them and was astonished and delighted with their progress. All of them were perfect in their catechism, and had committed a great portion of Scripture to memory. Many of them were far advanced in reading, writing and arithmetick. It is to be regretted that they have

²⁴ Angus Library, Letter from Jabez Carey to his father, William Carey, 8 October 1821.

been taught by a Heathen.²⁵

The last sentence comes as rather a shock, but a great deal of the teaching in Christian schools was done by non-Christians, another indication that education was not always linked with a straightforward evangelistic approach. Some consolation was found in the way that non-Christian parents and non-Christian teachers were brought into close contact with the Christian mission. No other Christian agency, with the possible exception of medical work, was able to claim as much.²⁶

There was another balance to be kept. Apologists of mission schools commended them, especially to the home constituency, as places where conversions took place. There was some nervousness expressed when this did not happen. As time went on, however, others were keen to defend the missionaries against any accusation that they were simply using the schools as a cover for 'proselytisation' - an accusation which the early educational missionaries would scarcely have understood. Daniel Potts says about the early

²⁵ Angus Library, Report by Rev. W.B.Symes on his inspection of a village school, part of his journal (unpublished) for February, 1839.

²⁶ One of the earliest drafts of the constitution of Serampore College gave the impression that the College founders wanted to make Christian education as accessible as possible to as wide a group as possible. College Statutes (never ratified) stated: 'The only "statement of faith" required is belief in Christ's Divinity and Atonement. Students are admissible at the discretion of the Council from any body of Christians whether Protestant, Roman Catholic, the Greek, or the Armenian Church; and for the purpose of study, from Mussulman and Hindoo youth whose habits forbid their living in College, no caste, colour or country shall bar any man from admission into Serampore College.' (Source: Angus Library).

Baptist educationalists:

Many have misguidedly accused missionaries of prostituting the high calling of education by using it as a means of proselytisation...Certainly they set up schools in hope of leading Indians to embrace Christianity. That after all was why they had come to India. Yet if this had been solely the purpose of their schools surely they would have closed them down when it became evident that their object was not being achieved. When one reads of how tenaciously the Baptists held on to and extended their educational plans it becomes clear that at least those at Serampore were interested in education for its own sake, regardless of the number of conversions achieved or not achieved.²⁷

However, there is little evidence that the Serampore Baptists ever saw education as being conducted 'for its own sake', if that means apart from a religious purpose. The Baptists shared contemporary attitudes to education in Britain, where the churches saw education as an essentially religious project. This explains their commitment, even though, as time went on, there were not many conversions. Indeed, as Michael Laird has suggested, the aim of the schooling was never primarily classroom conversions but to give the children a new world view. The idea was not to replace evangelism by education nor, on the other hand, simply to educate the children out of sheer benevolence. Rather 'Christian Enlightenment' would gradually turn the darkness of heathendom to

²⁷ E. Daniel Potts, British Baptists in India (Cambridge, 1967) p. 114.

light.²⁸

The Aims of Baptist Education: (3) The Rising Generation

In 1803, one of Carey, Marshman and Ward's quarterly letters home spoke of the need to instruct 'the rising generation' of Christians: 'For the instruction of the rising generation, of new comers, we have a free school divided into 3 classes. The first class, consisting of catechumens, are now learning in Bengallee the first principles of Christianity.'²⁹

A couple of years later (January, 1805) the circular letter spoke of the work in the schools as 'a nursery of the church, and one of the most important branches of the mission'.³⁰ Again in 1805:

We try to put forward our native brethren in publishing the word; we endeavour to inculcate upon them that this is their cause, and it is their country which is sinking into ruin. Further, we have done as much as is in our power, several ways, to promote a disposition to read among the natives at large, that their minds may be enlightened; for which end, also, we have encouraged charity schools, both by our own efforts, and

²⁸ Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 67.

²⁹ Angus Library, Quarterly report from the missionaries at Serampore, January 1803.

³⁰ Angus Library, Quarterly report from the missionaries at Serampore, January 1805.

exhortations to other Europeans.³¹

This optimism was wedded to a belief that events could move swiftly. The heathen could be converted and a native agency raised up at the same time, even in the same school. In 1811 H. Peacock, a Baptist missionary, speaking of his colleagues, Moore and Rowe, at Digah near Patna says:

They are situated in a pleasant part of the country and have established a school for young children which seems to be in a flourishing state. By the blessing of Providence much good may spring from hence. These children brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord may be a means of spreading the light of the Gospel round about.³²

As seemed so often the case, the Baptists did not appear to move on very far from the insights of their founding fathers. In 1864 an Indian Baptist pastor, Goolzar Shah, made the same point as if it had been newly discovered.

It is now generally admitted by those who have thought seriously on the subject that we must look to the agency and influence of the Native Christian Church as the great means of extending the Kingdom of Christ in this land... The difficulty if not impossibility of meeting the present urgent demand in all directions for efficient native preachers and

³¹ Angus Library, Letter from missionaries at Serampore (Carey, Marshman, Ward and others), August 6, 1805

³² Angus Library, Journal of H. Peacock (unpublished), March 1, 1811.

teachers is itself an indication, that we have been hardly alive to the important duty of training our youth for the work of Christ in this great country.³³

There were two aims being expressed here. Firstly, there was the matter just mentioned of raising up Indian evangelists to their own people. Secondly, there was the growing feeling amongst Indian Christians that they needed education for themselves and their children so that they might make social progress and 'get on' in the world. The former was a reason which could be used to persuade the home constituency. It kept the evangelistic purposes of missionary work firmly in view and was for that reason popular in the home countries where supporters still saw missionary work as primarily the task of 'converting the heathen'. The latter appealed to Indian Christians, who realised that education was one of the great missionary 'gifts' offered to their community. Many of them, coming as they did from humble backgrounds, saw quite clearly that education might be the means whereby they could overcome their social disadvantages. As we shall see, many missionaries were also well aware that there were real economic obstacles to a self-sustaining church and that education could help to change this.

The same Goolzar Shah on a visit to England made both points, in an address

³³ Angus Library, Circular letter from Goolzar Shah, pastor of the Baptist Church in South Colingah Street, appealing for funds for a boys' hostel in Calcutta so that village Christian boys could receive a good education at a day school in the city. Endorsed by the BMS leaders, Wenger, Lake and Leslie, April 1864.

to the Baptists of Northampton described in a letter by G.H.Rouse to John Wenger in 1871:

Goolzar Shah has made a very favourable impression here...at Northampton he did capitally...He was saying that the Society had too much neglected the education of the children of the members of the native churches, and then was now too much pressing them to become self-supporting, when we had not given them the education which would have enabled them to obtain such a position in society as would have enabled them to support their pastors; he said 'It is as if a father had starved his child, and given him no clothes, and put him in a bad place and then, when he was grown up, because he was not intelligent, should take a whip to whip him.' As he brought this out, suiting the action to the word, the effect was very great. What do you think of his proposal that the Society have a class of 200 or 300 native Christian lads at Serampore, children of village Christians, whom it should educate, in order to fit them either to become assistant missionaries, or, in the case of most of them, to enable them to attain a higher position socially and intellectually, and thus to be better able to form a self reliant native church? I feel convinced that we ought to do more, in some form, for the education of native Christians; I think that we ought to see if we cannot train up one or two native scholars, who may become Greek and Hebrew scholars, with a view to the next revision of the Scriptures. It seems to me that even if we were compelled to restrict our evangelistic agency, yet that the education of the native Christians is more important than

anything else, with a view to the formation of a self-sustaining church. What do you think? ³⁴

Wenger may already have been convinced of this argument. In his 'Reminiscences of my Indian Life, 1839-54' he recalled a time, long before Goolzar Shah's visit to Britain, when he had urged upon his fellow missionaries similar arguments. He lamented 'the very inadequate provision made for the education of our Christian children in the villages.' He continued:

Some of the children were being instructed in the two boarding schools at Calcutta, but those who remained in their native places were almost entirely neglected; for the few day schools that existed were altogether inefficient - one cause being that the removal to Calcutta of so many tended to empty and otherwise depress the local schools. I pleaded for the establishment of an efficient day school (or rather of two, one for boys and the other for girls) in every village where we had six or more Christian families and for the maintenance of the principle that those Christian parents who should neglect to care for the instruction of their children, should be subjected to church-discipline. My proposal was acknowledged by the brethren (with one exception) to be based upon sound principles, but at the same time they soon convinced me by an array of facts that it was utterly impracticable, both from the want of money and of qualified teachers and from the impossibility to

³⁴ Angus Library, G.H.Rouse to John Wenger, 23 October, 1871, Ramsey, Hunts.

superintend schools at such a distance and in a locality where strangers could not reside with impunity.

Wenger knew what he was talking about. In the same 'Reminiscences' he recorded:

On another occasion 133 adult native Christians - nearly all that belonged to the station - had come in from the various villages to the chapel. I took the opportunity to ascertain how many of them were able to read, and found that there were just thirteen.³⁵

The whole project of educating converts and the children of converts, won widespread support among missionaries and home supporters alike, particularly when it could be linked to the idea of 'raising up a native agency'. Catch phrases such as 'it will be the Indians who evangelise India' helped people to accept that educational work among Indian Christians could in due course be routed back into the main task of spreading Christianity.

Aims of Baptist education: (4) 'Leavening' or the diffusion theory

The supporters of Baptist mission were less happy about the so-called 'diffusion theory' which began to be heard among the missionaries as the nineteenth century wore on. The idea was simple enough. Christian converts might be

³⁵ Angus Library, 'Reminiscences of John Wenger', unpublished.

lacking, but the influence of Christianity was bound to spread through Christian education, and gradually this would have its effect on the nation. In due course this diffusion would promote social reform, civilised values and a vigorous Indian church. As we shall see this was to become the 'orthodox' approach among the educational missionaries as the century wore on.³⁶ The early Baptists had always had some such idea, though not perhaps very clearly formulated, and it is possible to see some attempt to incorporate it into the ethos and practice of Serampore College.

Serampore College

Serampore College was originally intended as a training ground for future Indian Christian leaders but also as a sort of Christian 'liberal arts' college for non - Christians, that is, it offered further education in both arts and sciences. The presence of non-Christians in the College was positively encouraged, both because it would provide them with an introduction to the Christian faith and because it created a 'realistic' environment for Christians training for the ministry amongst their non-Christian compatriots. Bengali was to be the medium of instruction. The curriculum was more Orientalist than Anglicist in terms of the categories we have already identified. Though English was to be taught as a subject, it was to have no higher place than that, a part of the necessary acquaintance with European culture. 'Literature' at Serampore

³⁶ See below, chapters 8 and 9.

meant in effect the literature of India, with a very strong emphasis on Sanskrit learning. The first two clauses of the first College prospectus, published in 1818, read as follows:

- (i) The College shall secure the instruction in the Sungskritu (Sanskrit) language of all the native Christian youth admitted, and of a certain number in Arabic and Persian, for which purpose the ablest native teachers shall be retained in these languages, at adequate salaries.
- (ii) It shall secure their being further instructed in the various shastras of the Hindoos; and in the doctrines which form the basis of the Pouranic and Buddhist systems. They shall also be instructed in those which relate to Hindoo Law.³⁷

Though there was a tacit admission that European science would need to be taught, even here the 'science now possessed by the Natives themselves' was not to be overlooked. European science textbooks were to be translated into Bengali. In brief Indian Christians were encouraged to learn more about their own culture with a view to being effective missionaries to their own people in due course, and no student, Christian or non-Christian, was to be left ignorant of their own Indian cultural heritage.

These principles just described would be more relevant to our study and deserve greater attention were it not for the melancholy fact that they were, in

³⁷ Cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 94.

practice, never carried through. In this sense Serampore College, as originally envisaged by its founders, was a failure. Sanskrit, supposedly the key language, ceased to have this role within ten years and about the same time English began to play a decisive part in the educational programme.³⁸ Western science was taught, especially after the arrival of the Scotsman, John Mack,³⁹ in 1821, using European methods, and to the exclusion of any other scientific tradition.

What were the reasons for this apparently dramatic change? One reason may have been that the College was simply responding to new personnel who did not have the Serampore Trio's vernacularist credentials. John Mack reflected the thought of the Scottish Enlightenment for example, a different approach than that of the Serampore Trio. A more likely reason, however, was that the College was forced to change because of the laws of supply and demand. There were insufficient Christians for the College to be solely devoted to training potential Christian workers, and non Christians simply would not come to the College as long as it pursued the curriculum as originally planned. By contrast the 'Westernisation', indeed Anglicisation of the College, produced a steady stream of students.⁴⁰ Alexander Duff's successful institution in Calcutta and the

³⁸ Letter, Joshua Marshman to John Wilson, describing the work at Serampore: 'The Sungskritu (sic) has fallen back to a mere secondary place, and the English has been raised to greater prominence.' Smith, The Life of John Wilson p. 246.

³⁹ John Mack (1797-1845) was originally intended for the Church of Scotland ministry but became a Baptist while in Gloucester in 1818. He studied philosophy at Edinburgh and joined the Serampore staff in 1821. He and J.C.Marshman became the leaders of the work at Serampore after the passing of the Serampore Trio.

⁴⁰ Laird, Missionary Education in Bengal, pp. 144-5.

vigorous polemic pursued by him in favour of English education, may also have influenced the Baptists, but this is perhaps the same point from a different angle. Duff's success was precisely the success of the Anglicist. It contrasted with the failure of Serampore as the 'vernacularist' or, if you take into account the emphasis on Sanskrit, perhaps the 'Orientalist' College. The economic and social reality of the day was that the Anglicists were in the process of establishing some sort of cultural hegemony in the name of 'progress' and 'enlightenment'. Despite Duff's confidence that he was putting in place a 'strategy' which would undermine Hinduism and disseminate Christianity, he may have been doing little more than responding to the prevailing economic and cultural forces of his day which demanded an English-medium education. Of course, it is not false to assume that Duff brought his 'strategy' with him. He was not merely responding to Bengali realities. But he tended, perhaps, to put down the success of his educational initiative to 'spiritual' factors and to overlook economic ones.⁴¹

Brian Stanley's recent history of the Baptist Missionary Society has made further suggestions as to why Serampore College changed direction.⁴² If the

⁴¹ A century later Bishop Pickett noted that these economic forces applied to education generally. 'A missionary in the Punjab discovered that as long as employment for all Christian boys who passed the sixth class was practically assured by the demand of the mission for preachers and teachers, and by openings on the railways, in Government service, factories, mills etc. there was a steady increase both in the enrolment of Christian boys and in the proportion of enrolled boys earning class promotions. When the assurance of employment disappeared, enrolment and attendance declined. (Pickett, Christian Mass Movements p. 276).

⁴² B. Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society pp. 158-9.

prime aim was to educate church members for Christian service, there clearly needed to be the possibility of drawing upon a flourishing church. It was the church which would send up worthwhile candidates for training, support them financially during their training, and provide opportunities for service after the training was over. Also, if the training provided was itself a preparation for other walks of life then there might be a considerable danger that students would be lost to other vocations, particularly if these were better paid. The College's founders, as we have seen, believed that Christian education was a source of worthwhile influence in itself, spreading, however gradually, the light of the gospel. Similarly the founders had a view of missionary training which encouraged them to teach a wide curriculum (i.e. not just theological subjects). While the theory was no doubt admirable, it was likely that those who had a wide educational background might also feel that they had a wide choice of vocations before them when they graduated. Other institutions primarily set up for theological and missionary training had similar difficulties. Bishop's College in Calcutta was a case in point, as we shall see in chapter 5, and so was the LMS College at Nagercoil which found that a number of students were regularly attracted away from service in the church by offers of well paid work in the coffee plantations, offers which were available to them because they had gained language skills in the College.⁴³ The growing popularity of English, and perhaps also of Western science, meant that a College which was staffed by native English speakers, some of whom had great knowledge in Western science - John Mack, again, is the obvious example - was bound to be tempted to cash in

⁴³ D.Kooiman, Conversion and Social Equality in India: The London Missionary Society in South Travancore in the 19th Century (Amsterdam, 1989) pp. 109-116.

on this asset, perhaps to the detriment of other aspects of the College's life.

In summary it may simply be that Serampore was attempting vainly 'to swim against the tide', in two ways. Its home constituency, the BMS and its supporters, did not approve of its 'liberal education' approach, while the Calcutta public wanted English medium education. The former saw the Serampore Trio (and J.C.Marshman) as insufficiently zealous. The latter saw them as insufficiently 'modern'. The Calcutta Baptists, who were much more attuned to their 'public' scored on both counts. They were openly critical of the lack of Christian emphasis at Serampore (in particular the College's willingness to admit non-Christian students) and at the same time were more 'Anglicised' . They were critical of Serampore's initial use of Sanskrit instead of English, ⁴⁴ and supported Alexander Duff's idea of a united English medium College in Calcutta.⁴⁵ Their Anglicist views probably reflected their more formal college training. Eustace Carey, William Yates and W.H.Pearce had all studied under John Ryland at the Bristol Baptist Academy, a college which aspired to high academic standards.⁴⁶

The Baptists as a whole never abandoned the idea that 'raising a native agency' was crucial to their work. Serampore College continued to be important to the

⁴⁴ Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 148.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 250-1.

⁴⁶ S.Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries 1789-1858 (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984) pp. 171-4.

Baptist enterprise, at least in theory, because it could be used in this way. The problem with the greater emphasis on English, just noted, was precisely that the whole idea of training for Christian ministry became less important.

J.C.Marshman wrote to BMS headquarters in 1850, on the eve of handing over the College to the BMS, and his description of the work of the College indicated how far it had moved from its purpose of training village pastors. Marshman distinguished three aspects of the work at the College: 'two divisions of the Missionary department, the training up of Missionaries in European habits, and of native itinerants' and a third branch of operations, 'that of imparting a secular education to the native community in European science and literature and on Christian principles'. The BMS had never approved of the third branch and even after they took over, only the first two were to be funded by the Mission. Marshman's description (in 1852) of the curriculum devised for 'the class of resident students in European habits' at Serampore suggests that there, too, little thought had been given to a training appropriate to the local culture. The science was Western science, the history concerned the spread of Christianity in the West; Latin and Greek were both on the curriculum and so was English poetry. Most significant was the content of the 'Divinity, properly so called'. This consisted of 'Hill's Lectures...with Butler's Analogy, Paley, and the parts of Chalmers' Institutes which treat of these subjects.' ⁴⁷ Recent work by Ian Maxwell has made it clear that the use of Hill, Butler, Paley, Chalmers, and the like, is evidence that by 1852 the curriculum at Serampore was very close to that recommended by the leading thinkers of the Scottish

⁴⁷ Angus Library, Letter from J.C.Marshman to Rev.F.Trestrail and E.B.Underhill, March 5, 1852.

Enlightenment, already powerfully represented in India by Alexander Duff and his followers.⁴⁸ The rational Calvinism of Duff had superseded the Evangelical Calvinism of Carey. Or to use a different terminology, the Serampore curriculum and style was more and more influenced by rationalism and Anglicisation (Westernisation) as against the pietism and vernacularism which had once characterised it. It is only necessary to compare Marshman's curriculum, with that described in the initial Serampore prospectus (see above p.118) to see how far this process had gone.

When the BMS gained control of the College in the 1850s a vernacular

⁴⁸ See above p.39. J.C.Marshman in his letter gave a detailed description of the Serampore curriculum, one year's study devised for 'the class of resident students in European habits' .

In Mental Science - Brown has been studied regularly with the higher works such as Stuart Reid, Wheatley etc. The Old Testament history has been studied to the captivity. John and Keith have been issued as textbooks. In Divinity, properly so called, Hill's Lectures have been carefully read with Butler's Analogy, Paley, and the parts of Chalmers Institutes which treat of these subjects. In Ecclesiastical History, the class has advanced to the Eleventh Century. Mosheim, Giesler and Neander have been used as textbooks. The Greek of the Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians has been carefully analysed and the Philoctetes of Sophocles completed. In Latin Horace's Select Satires and Epistles and the Vth and VIth books of Virgil's Aeneid have been read; with the latter book Dr McKnight and Bishop Warburton's Divine Legation have been examined. Fridays have been devoted to Science and English poetry. The Novum Organum Mechanics and Chemistry; Geometry about 3 books; Algebra and Logarithmetical Arithmetic. On Thursdays lectures have been delivered and the pupils subjected to careful examination.

While it may be argued that these were students from a 'Western' background, Marshman assumed that they would go into missionary work in India, always providing the Society had sufficient funds to employ them. He mentioned that one of the ex-students had recently been appointed to be in charge of the Benevolent Institution in Calcutta, where no doubt a similar style of education was perpetuated.

theological class was re-established, but this amounted to little, particularly as the first teacher of the class, George Pearce, preferred to teach in Calcutta. In 1857 the College was affiliated to Calcutta University but this further reduced the role of the College as a theological institution which, for the time being, became minimal.⁴⁹ Dissatisfied with this state of affairs, in 1883 the BMS Committee severed the link with Calcutta University, limited admission to the school to Christians, and recommenced a vernacular theological class. A letter written in 1895 by G.H.Rouse to A.H.Baynes, however, indicates that the venture still languished.

As I said to you in my last letter, I feel that Serampore ought to be well manned, whatever other stations suffer. Our mission all over Bengal depends on the supply of men from Serampore; if that supply is not up to the mark, owing to weakness in the teaching staff, or any other cause, the whole Mission will suffer...I was thinking today of the contrast between our Mission and others. The Free Church, LMS, CMS, SPG etc. have all of them a fair number of Bengali missionaries of good ability and education and we have hardly any who are educated as they are. We have good men, and some I hope will prove to have the stamina to work more or less alone, but they have not the educational finish of the men I refer to...We ought to give a thorough education at Serampore, to men who show that they are fit for it.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ B. Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society p. 158.

⁵⁰ Angus Library, G.H.Rouse to A.H.Baynes, June 22, 1895.

Later a yet more adventurous proposal was taken up to reconstitute Serampore as a Christian University with an interdenominational Senate empowered to confer degrees and diplomas on students from institutions all over India. Once this had proved feasible the general Arts department was revived and so was the link with Calcutta University (1911).⁵¹

Those who advocated these moves claimed, with some justice, that they were returning to the original vision of the founders, who had always believed that a general education on Christian principles would be a means of indirectly spreading the gospel. However, as Brian Stanley has pointed out, the other and perhaps more important aspect of the vision, the raising up of a qualified band of church leaders, was not so well served, particularly if the distinctive needs of the BMS were considered. Their work had mainly prospered (and this was not only true of the BMS) amongst tribal and low-caste groups, and what was needed in their case was vernacular theological training, perhaps at a less sophisticated level than was now being provided at Serampore. The vernacular department continued to exist at Serampore but was weak, unable to flourish in the vicinity of the new English medium department.⁵²

Let us return briefly to J.C.Marshman's defence of the work of the College, in 1852. Essentially the point that Marshman wanted to make was that through

⁵¹ B.Stanley, The History of the Baptist Missionary Society p.161.

⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 161-2. See also B.Stanley, 'Planting Self-Governing Churches: British Baptist Ecclesiology in the Missionary Context', Baptist Quarterly Vol. xxxiv No. 8, October 1992 pp. 379-81.

the education imparted at the College the non Christian students were undergoing an inevitable process of change in world view and belief structure.

The greater portion of those who are borne upon the roll, are necessarily employed in acquiring the rudiments of English, but you will have a clear idea of the character of the instruction given here, when we state that the Second Class, consisting of sixteen, have been employed in reading the Old and New Testament, Milton, Cowper, Bacon's Essays, Abercrombie, the History of Rome and England, Arithmetic, Geometry and Algebra, Kittoe's Palestine and Gurney's Evidences. Some of the senior youths in this class would, we think, be found equal to any of those who have been trained up elsewhere, in the depth and variety of their attainments, and though few of them have embraced Christianity, yet their minds have been deeply imbued with its doctrines and they have been raised above the superstition of their forefathers. They are in the condition in which hundreds of well educated Native youths now find themselves to be in and about Calcutta. In principle they have ceased to be Hindoos, but they are not Christians avowedly in practice or profession. When the time comes, however, we are confident that the immortal seed of Divine truth sown in their minds in this Institution, will spring up and bring forth abundant fruit.⁵³

Marshman was in effect adopting a 'diffusion' theory, something which was

⁵³ Angus Library, Letter J.C.Marshman to Rev. F.Trestrail and E.B.Underhill,

becoming increasingly popular among missionary educationists in general. In fact his defence of the College is important evidence of the debate that was going on in mission circles about education. He defended the College again in a letter to John Wilson of Bombay, claiming that 'the assertion of the founders of the College (i.e. Serampore) is fully justified that their object in planning it was the enlightening of India and the propagation and final establishment of the Gospel therein.' He went on to describe how their 'heathen' students study the Scriptures two days a week and how that all their studies 'are conducted after a Christian manner'. They do not have to attend Christian worship and they do not have to do or say anything which is inconsistent with their own faith but, he added 'the whole controversy between Christianity and idolatry, and the whole contrast between religion and irreligion, are before them continually; and we leave the result to God'. His parting shot was: 'What more can be necessary to make the College a religious institution?' Marshman was obviously reacting to the criticism that Serampore College had become a 'secular' institution.⁵⁴

Wilson may have been sympathetic to Marshman's 'apologia' for Serampore College but Marshman knew that the BMS did not approve of the sort of education he described to Wilson. The letter to the BMS concluded with a reassurance intended to soothe their feelings: 'As only two months have elapsed since we received intimation of the Society's determination to connect the missionary exertions of the College with their labour, we have not been able to

March 5, 1852. He is giving a 'brief notice' of the progress of Serampore College.

⁵⁴ See Smith, The Life of John Wilson p. 247.

make any arrangements for organising a Native class of itinerants and catechists, but we shall not lose sight of this most important object during the present year.' ⁵⁵ This last was what the Society really wanted from Serampore College. They were not nearly so keen on the 'diffusion work' described above by Marshman.

John Trafford

Twenty two years later Rev. John Trafford presented a paper to the Baptist Union in Newcastle in which he tried to summarise the arguments that had surrounded Serampore College. Trafford began by commenting that Serampore was 'in some of its fundamental conceptions...too conservative and oriental'. He gave greater credit to the work of Alexander Duff, which 'in one important respect...was radically different from what had been contemplated at Serampore, and therein it met the feelings of the community. Instead of the classical languages of the East, English was used from the earliest possible period as a medium of instruction. English classical authors, European science, and Christian theology formed the curriculum of study.' Trafford's evidence provided more evidence that Duff and his strategy had won the day, even among the Baptists.

This apart - that Serampore was perhaps too 'orientalist' - Trafford was happy to defend the work at Serampore and indeed the educational method in general,

⁵⁵ Letter Marshman to Trestrail and Underwood. See note 44 above.

though he maintained that it had never been intended to apply to every section of the community, but rather only to 'the chief centres of pure Hindu society'. He claimed that 'the Mahomedans as a class are inaccessible by education. The various aboriginal tribes can be reached without it.' He continued:

The agency contemplated difficulties and opportunities peculiar to Hindoo society, and those who in that society have the greatest social importance; not so much the wealthy, who would, if they cared for education, resort to Government colleges, but the higher middle classes who have possessed and valued the learning of their own country, who have looked to education rather than other things for their support, and had been the classes most strongly entrenched in the defences of Hindooism.

So the educational method could be justified on the basis of the special opportunity it offered to reach a section of Hindu society, 'a class...otherwise inaccessible.' The strategy was simple 'Gather them where they will assemble and teach them language, science, history, anything true and good, if thereby there be full opportunity to teach them of Christ.' Trafford quoted William Miller of the Madras Christian College in support of this. Miller claimed that conversions had taken place in Christian educational institutions, 'More than by all other means put together.'

Having established to his own satisfaction that the College had a legitimate role in the evangelism of Hindus, Trafford then admitted that one of the major goals, perhaps the most important one to the original founders, namely the raising up of a 'large and efficient body of native evangelists' had not been achieved.

Furthermore, having admitted this relative failure, Trafford seemed less sure too on the issue of conversions. He pointed out that conversions took place as a result of 'the united influence or successive influence of many things... the function of education is essentially preparatory, and the value of these schools must be judged of not by their immediate but remote effects - not by what they accomplish alone, but by what they may effect in co-operation with other means.' He cited as an example the way that Hinduism has been undermined as a religious system through the teaching of 'historical and scientific knowledge' in Government institutions.

After this Trafford seemed somewhat to clutch at straws. Almost any sign of an increasingly positive attitude to Christianity could be put down as an indication of the success of Christian education. Preachers found that occasional sympathetic hearers were from Christian schools. The schools had produced 'a more kindly feeling towards Christian missionaries', and 'a more tolerant spirit towards native Christians'. 'There was a growing persuasion among people that Hindooism was passing away.' and he gave as an example the way that Hindus were promoting 'the education and elevation of women'. Finally he cited 'a higher tone of morality which is admitted to be present among those educated

at Christian institutions but which is spreading to all classes.' ⁵⁶

Trafford's defence of the work at Serampore College may serve as a summary. The educational work was limited to a particular context, but in that context it had achieved more results than any other means employed by mission agencies. This applied even in the matter of obtaining conversions. However, the indirect effects of education were incalculable. Diffusion of Christian knowledge and ideals was taking place with long term effects, but it was not clear when and where the 'fruit' of this labour would appear. Where Serampore was evidently failing in its task - and we can tell this because Trafford scarcely mentions it - was in the field of raising up a missionary and pastoral ministry from within the native church.

What was true for Serampore College was true for the Baptist educational work as a whole. The Baptist response to the local culture, particularly the Serampore Trio's interaction with Bengali language and culture, was clearly significant. There were a few conversions and much talk of 'diffusion'. There was not, however, much success in raising up a trained Indian leadership.

⁵⁶ Angus Library, A paper, entitled 'Education and Mission' delivered by Rev J. Trafford, president of Serampore College, to the Baptist Union at Newcastle on Oct 6 1874. The statistics to which Trafford draws attention are expressed as follows: How many brethren throughout the country give themselves entirely or chiefly to such (i.e. educational) work, I am unable to say. It appears from the statistics of mission colleges and schools, published in 1872, that in the ten preceding years from missionary colleges and schools there had passed the Matriculation Examination 1,621, the First Art Examination 513, and about 180 had taken different degrees.

Serampore College achieved little along this line, nor was success achieved elsewhere. Both inside and outside the College the aim was subverted by the move towards English medium higher education. We must now look at Bishop's College and its schools. The College is a particularly relevant witness because it was devoted to the precise purpose of training up an Indian ministry.

Chapter 5: Bishop's College and its Schools

The more I see of India, the more I am convinced that its conversion will be best accomplished by the agency of natives of the country, and that we have already reached the moment when it will be no longer desirable to incur the great expense of sending out missionaries from Europe.¹

so wrote Bishop Heber in 1825.

The idea, even then was not new. Bishop's College was a theological college, founded by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, with precisely this idea of a 'native agency' in mind. It opened in 1824, though the inspiration for the College went back to 1818 and originated with Bishop Middleton, the first Bishop of Calcutta. Its main purpose was to produce Church of England clergymen to cater for the growing needs of the Christian establishment in India.² Middleton and his colleagues realised that they could never make much impact on India (in any chosen sphere) if they did not raise up Indian helpers to join them in the work. The statutes of the College were quite clear about this need. One of the aims of the College was:

¹ Bishop Reginald Heber, Narrative of a Journey Through the Upper Provinces of India vol. 2 (London, 1849) p.237.

² Michael Laird has pointed out that part of the original plan for the College was the education of Hindus and Muslims. However, this idea was subsequently dropped and was not mentioned in the statutes of 1821. See M.Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal 1793-1837 (Oxford, 1972) p. 150.

The education of Christian youth, whether European, or of mixed race, or native, in the doctrine and discipline of the united Church of England and Ireland, and their instruction in theology, in the languages of the East and in other requisite branches of learning in order that they may become duly qualified to become missionaries, catechists, or schoolmasters in such places as may from time to time be deemed expedient.³

In this statement it is not the desire to train Indians 'in the doctrine and discipline of the united Church of England' which is exceptional. This was no more than was on offer to any youth who might be educated as a member of the Church of England. It is the clear statement of a missionary purpose that makes it stand out as more than just a higher education conducted by the Church. The missionary training proposed, and indeed carried out, was extremely thorough. Students were to be from Christian families, of course, and the parents of prospective scholars were asked to give guarantees that their sons (there were no girls or women admitted) had a serious purpose in seeking training and would refund scholarship fees if they did not go on to missionary work. Students were admitted at the age of 14. They then did five years of study and thereafter were sent out as catechists to work with missionaries already in the field. During this period of service they were expected to continue their studies and their performance was kept constantly under review by means of twice yearly assessments at the College. The amendment to the statutes

³ Instrument of the Foundation of the Statutes of Bishop's College, 1825 (USPG.C.IND.1.7.3).

adopted in 1851 clearly stated: 'Twice a year the catechists shall present themselves in College to be examined by the Council as to their progress, both in theological studies and in practical acquaintance with missionary tasks.' This provision meant that in addition to the lecture hall learning, some learning was going on under the eye of trained and experienced men, a model which was deduced from dominical practice. At the age of twenty two, if their service had proved to be satisfactory, they were re-admitted to the College as 'probationers' for a further period of study until they were ordained as deacons.

This course of education included several dynamic features. The training and the purpose of the training was seen as a unity. 'The whole plan,' wrote one contemporary observer, 'provides that the College shall not be confined within the walls of the College. The College is in fact but the centre of a system which should extend itself through all its dependencies and connexions, however remote.' This meant that in addition to the College itself, Christian work was carried on in the vicinity under the College's direction. It was therefore clear from the start what the aim of the training was, and what sort of work the graduates could expect to do and, to put it in crude economic terms, that there was a job waiting at the end of the process. This may have helped the students when they contemplated how long it would be before they were fully qualified, something like nine years as a minimum. Admittedly the students started very young by today's standards (though this was a common enough practice in the nineteenth century) but on the other hand training throughout was focused on the one purpose. Students and their parents contemplating the length of preparation needed and the specialisation involved may well have been

somewhat daunted, a possible reason for the low intake of students which was always a problem for the College.

The College's 'studies' were described briefly in the Instrument of Foundation as:

Theology, with the Hebrew, Greek and Latin languages as subsidiary to it. History both Ancient and Modern, Ecclesiastical and Civil, the elements of Philosophical and Mathematical knowledge and divers Oriental languages together with the English language to be taught to all native students. ⁴

This course of studies was, as can be seen, as near as possible a copy of a Western style theological training. As such it contrasted with the initial plans for Serampore College, ⁵ where there was a conscious effort to impart knowledge through the vernacular languages and to value the Indian literary heritage at least as a means of helping future Christian workers to understand their own cultural heritage. Thus all Indian students were to be taught Sanskrit. Two things may be said in defence of Bishop's College. Firstly, Serampore abandoned much of its 'Orientalism' fairly quickly and secondly, though the College's curriculum made little attempt to accommodate to the prevailing Indian culture, the missionary purpose could be clearly seen in the language

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ See above p. 121.

provisions. Any student who had one of the vernacular languages (some of the students were from European families and had English as their first language) was to be encouraged to go back to his own people, so that he could take full advantage of this natural skill. A marginal note in the Instrument of Foundation read: 'the plan [i.e. of the curriculum] supposes that every country-born or native student to whom some one of the native languages is, of course, vernacular, shall afterwards be employed in his native country; otherwise the vernacular tongue would be of no value to the Society, and he would be required to preach or teach in some other, which he has learned but imperfectly.' ⁶ Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian were taught on the grounds that 'tho they will not be wanted for merely missionary purposes, they are, however, essential to a critical acquaintance with the common languages.' Clearly this was not a love of Oriental learning but rather a pragmatic belief in 'classical' languages as necessary for understanding the vernacular, again for the purposes of an effective ministry. The only nod in the direction of Orientalism was the cryptic sentence which concluded the mention of Classical languages and which claimed that 'it would, moreover, be discreditable to exclude them'.⁷

As a result of its ancillary work and satellite schools the College did have a directly evangelising and social purpose, including promoting Christian education more widely. This was largely as a means to an end, however. If the pressing need was to train up 'missionaries, catechists, or schoolmasters', this

⁶ Marginal note in *ibid.*

⁷ *ibid.*

in turn would not be possible unless there were suitable candidates for training. Even when one of the aims of the College was specifically stated to be the education of schoolteachers, this did not necessarily mean providing education as a social service for the community at large. Rather it was a plan to staff schools which would 'feed' the institutions of higher education. These would in turn feed into the system potential candidates for training at the College and for ordination. As late as 1836 a minute of the proceedings of the College council lamented 'the low state of elementary education (until very lately) in India' and surmised that years must pass 'before any large number of general students can be expected', and gave these as reasons for the poor College intake.⁸

The first Principal of the College, Dr W.H. Mill, understood the purpose of the College very well. As he said in 1824, 'there is still no permanent supply of Christian labourers for the growing wants of this vast country, but that which this College promises'.⁹ He was dismissive of the Baptists' Serampore College, because it was not sufficiently concerned with the training of Christians. 'I have heard', he said, speaking of Serampore College 'of no students beside proper natives (for whom it glories in being destined): these are nearly all Bengalis, principally heathen, but partly children of the native converts of that active sect.' It is not clear whether Mill was more displeased by the presence at

⁸ Proceedings of the Council of Bishop's College, Feb 1, 1836 (USPG.C.IND.1.11.24).

⁹ Letter, Principal Dr W.H. Mill to Rev A. Hamilton, Sep 14, 1824 (USPG.C.IND.1.9(i).13).

Serampore of so many Bengalis or so many 'heathen'. Or was this simply a matter of social and denominational prejudice? His indignation, however, was greatest that 'philosophy' was being taught in an indiscriminate fashion:

This amusing of the public mind with the magnificent notion of giving philosophical instruction on a large scale to all natives without limit, when nothing like it is done or even attempted in this College without plan or statutes or any definite line of proceeding - all this is a policy which I have little wish or expectation of seeing followed by any member of our communion.¹⁰

Mill, himself, was under pressure, however, to change the purpose of Bishop's College and in that sense to come nearer to the Serampore pattern. There were many - the dynamic Bishop Heber was a case in point - who wanted the College to have a wider remit, to offer a university style education after the pattern of Oxford and Cambridge, which were of course, at the time, religious foundations. Mill's defence of the original purpose of the College was weakened by the small number of candidates coming forward for theological training. Presiding, as he was, over an expensive institution often only half-full, he was expected to look around for alternatives. Ironically, the Baptists at Serampore and Bishop's College were on the receiving end of contrary pressures from their home boards.

¹⁰ *ibid.* Mill's attitude throws light on the way in which Carey's claim to be offering education as an empowerment to the underprivileged was resented by the establishment, an echo, perhaps, of class differences and Church versus Chapel, back in Britain. It also may have something to do with the fact that W.H. Mill was a noted Orientalist, and believed that Serampore was not equal to the task.

Bishop's College was constantly exhorted from SPG headquarters in England to consider widening its intake and opening its doors to those who wanted education but not specifically training for Christian work. By contrast Serampore College, as we have seen, had always intended to offer a wide education and incurred the displeasure of the BMS because they were not sufficiently focused on a 'missionary' purpose, that is the using of the College to train missionaries.

These contrasting pressures reflected denominational differences in England. The Baptists represented a nonconformist and evangelical constituency, who felt that missionaries must be first of all employed in preaching, church planting and the distribution of Christian literature. An expensive college offering widely based education for all comers did not fit well into this pattern.¹¹ Bishop's College on the other hand had been established by the Church of England. It was staffed by the SPG whose supporters in England were usually more High Church than evangelical, and were largely content to think of a Christian 'university' in a great capital city like Calcutta, offering Christian education to those who cared to take it up.

The controversy over the purpose of Bishop's College was partially settled in favour of Mill's opponents in 1830. The College statutes were revised, the key point being that the Society (the SPG) had decided to 'empower the Visitor of the College Council (i.e. the incumbent Bishop of Calcutta) to admit, under certain

¹¹ Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 149.

restrictions and regulations, hereafter to be agreed upon, students not destined for ecclesiastical or missionary purposes, to be educated at the College'.¹² In fact the distance between Mill's vision for the College and that of men like Bishop Heber may not have been all that great. All schools and colleges which educated through the medium of English and offered a Western curriculum, however specialist their concerns, were attempting to draw local people into the circle of European culture. This was true for theological training as much as for anything else. Even Mill saw the possibility that Bishop's College might become the nucleus of a University of Calcutta, though he believed that that would only be appropriate when there were enough Christians in India to take advantage of the facility. When the time did come for a more 'open door' policy it did not amount to a great deal. The new 'lay' members of the College had to be members of the Church of England and there was little attempt to alter the curriculum of the College to suit them.¹³ Again we can compare the Oxford and Cambridge model. In the time of which we are speaking those Universities were not even open to Nonconformists let alone non-Christians, and were seen largely as religious institutions training a large proportion of their students for the priesthood.

It seems that on the whole the College maintained a steady purpose.

G.U. Withers, Mill's successor as Principal, steadfastly defended the original

¹² Proceedings of the Council of Bishop's College, Jan 7, 1830 (USPG.C.IND.1.11.9).

¹³ M. Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 151.

plan. He said, and it was a theme he returned to again and again, that it was only a matter of waiting for Christian education to spread. For the time being educated native Christians were at a premium. 'There is not, at this moment, a single educated native convert in our communion, who has not entered on some employment,' ¹⁴ he said to Ernest Hawkins at SPG headquarters, in yet another letter defending the existence of the College, despite the paucity of students. The Indo-Europeans had not got the schools to prepare their students for College life; lay students would 'lower the spiritual tone'; the College was too far from Calcutta for lay students anyway; those who could afford to do so sent their children to Britain.

The debate about whether Bishop's College was 'earning its keep' widened out into a debate about whether the College was fitted to produce appropriately prepared native Christian leaders in any case. Critics of the College were not slow to suggest that it was not simply a matter of waiting for Christian education to spread, thus providing a greater selection of candidates for training. The CMS attempted to open a seminary of its own for training up the Bengali clergy in 1836 - it lasted less than a year -¹⁵ and used the occasion to attack Bishop's College and its methods.¹⁶

The main thrust of the attack was that Bishop's College was too grand to

¹⁴ Letter, G.U. Withers to Rev. E. Hawkins, 6 April, 1846 (USPG C.IND 1. 12.121).

¹⁵ M. Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 154.

¹⁶ Letter, Withers to A.M. Campbell, January 12, 1837 (USPG C.IND. 1.12.51).

serve the indigenous church, but this may have included an attack made on ecclesiological grounds. Part of the CMS attack was that 'the stateliness of the buildings and indeed the whole character of the College 'would of necessity operate on their minds, and foster within them "Brahminical" feelings of priestly "assumption" instead of the humble spirit of devoted missionaries' .¹⁷ It is easy to surmise that theological disputes, imported from England, were playing their part in the controversy. Bishop Daniel Wilson who arrived in Calcutta in 1832 (and who was quick to assert his prerogatives as Visitor of Bishop's College) was very much in the Evangelical camp and very much the controversialist. More attuned to the evangelical CMS than the 'high church' SPG, by 1836 it may well be that the rise of the Tractarians in England was adding to his concerns about the College. The Principal, Mill, had Tractarian sympathies,¹⁸ and Wilson was clearly dismayed by the appointment of Professor Street in 1839. Street was recommended by J.H.Newman, himself, and described by Newman as a man of 'sound doctrinal views'. Wilson had no doubt that Street was a Tractarian, in fact he claimed that Street's Tractarian views were 'tenaciously held, openly avowed, and widely promulgated.' ¹⁹ In fact Wilson tried to have him removed. He wrote to the SPG to this effect in March 1844, but without

¹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸ See Laird, Missionaries and Education p. 154.

¹⁹ See Josiah Bateman, The Life of the Right Reverend Daniel Wilson (London, 1860) p. 186.

success.²⁰ He also complained bitterly and publicly of the Tractarian influence in the SPG during his furlough of 1845.²¹ Again no action was taken and relations with the SPG never really recovered.

Did this dispute have any serious repercussions for the College? In a practical way the College, always short of students, could not afford to lose the confidence of the Bishop. There was a long correspondence between Principal Withers and the Bishop in 1842 when it came to Withers' ears that the Archdeacon had reportedly said that 'the Bishop was determined to send no more natives to the College'. The Bishop eventually backed down and said that the Archdeacon had been misreported, but in the course of the correspondence both Withers and Street were accused of 'Puseyism' and Street felt the need to defend his position at length. (It is interesting that he specifically denied the charge of 'Puseyism'.) As a result of this controversy, Wilson wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury (as President of the SPG) and, as mentioned above, two years later asked that Street be removed.²²

Another repercussion was the loss of Evangelical support in Britain. This may have had financial implications for the SPG and for the College indirectly. Brian Stanley has shown how the affairs at Bishop's College were under discussion

²⁰ Letter, Bishop of Calcutta to Hawkins, March 4 1844, (USPG C.INDIA 1.13:124 A-C).

²¹ Bateman, Life of Wilson p. 261.

²² USPG C.IND.1.12.87, 1.13.43 and 1.13.124 A-C.

in Britain at this time.²³ A.M.Campbell of the SPG had given assurances at an SPG meeting at Cheltenham (reported in the Evangelical Record) that the Society did not send any missionaries who were overtly Tractarian. Bishop's College came into the frame precisely because of the presence there of A.G.Street. (There was also a veiled reference to the fact that Manning had not been chosen as Principal of Bishop's College because of his Tractarianism). Campbell's speech reassured Evangelical subscribers but the subsequent claim that the Society did not make formal enquiries of its candidates as to their Tractarian sympathies spoilt the effect. It was the second stance that he maintained when the issue was brought to a head. However, under pressure from Evangelical supporters such as Edward Bickersteth, Campbell agreed that the Society would adopt the Articles and liturgy of the Church of England in their 'literal' (i.e. non-Tractarian) sense. However the damage had been done. The Record for example turned against the SPG at this point and the Society naturally lost most of its Evangelical supporters. Hawkins who took over from Campbell after the Cheltenham affair had in effect caused Campbell's resignation, was reckoned to be a Tractarian.

An intriguing question is whether the Tractarian influence in the College actually changed very much. It is argued below ²⁴ that Street was more in favour of education for Christians than non-Christians in a village context, and

²³ B.Stanley, 'Home Support for Overseas Missions in Early Victorian England, c. 1838-73' (Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1979) pp. 97-102.

²⁴ See pp. 164-5.

that this may have been a result of his theological convictions. This would hardly apply to the College, however, where all the students were Christians. Daniel Wilson attacked the College as late as 1849. He agreed that it was admirable in many ways, but it lacked 'the river of the water of life'.²⁵ This is hardly very specific. The CMS attack, mentioned above, that the students were given too 'priestly' a character, also seems to amount to very little.

In India, as in Britain, suspicions remained. Several years later Rev James Ling wrote to Ernest Hawkins again on the topic of the College's 'style'. He repeated the received wisdom that the gospel would not spread without the raising up of an 'indigenous agency', but claimed that it was never likely to happen at Bishop's College because the native students were being 'Europeanised' in Calcutta (and at the College) in such a way that they were rendered almost useless as servants of the gospel. The Indian students were adopting 'European luxuries and a European style of expenditure', and were led to expect salaries of Rs 80 per month when the families that would be supporting them in the rural churches to which they would be posted would have to make do on an income of Rs 5 a month. This scale of salary, even if it could be attained, served in itself to Europeanise them and to cut them off from their fellow Indians who continued therefore to think of Christianity as European and Hinduism as Indian. Furthermore the catechists, having grown used to city luxury, might not even be willing to return to rural areas where their natural ministry lay. A final criticism was that the fees of Bishop's College were kept artificially high

²⁵ Bateman, Life of Wilson vol 2 p. 320.

because of this lack of simplicity, thereby debarring from the College some students who might have a genuine call to the Christian ministry.²⁶ Similar criticisms were made of Serampore particularly by the Calcutta Baptists and therefore by their supporters in England. ²⁷

The College's staffing policy was equally open to criticism. There was little attempt made to recruit Indian teaching staff, for example, even when the shortage of lecturers was desperate, though, with the Indian church in such an embryonic state, it was no doubt difficult to find anybody suitable.

K.M.Banerjea was appointed in January 1852, the first Indian member of the teaching staff, but it would appear that the College accepted him reluctantly at the behest of the Bishop.²⁸ The value of local recruiting was immediately illustrated by the way this increased contact with local Christians. Withers described how Kali Mohun Banoorjea, 'who was then residing with his brother' was baptised. A friend of the newly baptised,

²⁶ Letter Rev. James Ling to Hawkins, 2 May, 1850 (USPG D3(A)79). These criticisms clearly had some force. Students removed from their original environment to undergo a lengthy training in Calcutta might well suffer a degree of cultural change (not just 'Europeanisation' but a general raising of their living standards and career expectations) that would make it difficult for them to go back to their own people. However, one can say in the College's defence that this was a difficulty which troubled theological educators from the outset of the missionary enterprise, and which was to come up regularly in the Indian context. It was also true that Bishop's College was under fire not just for educational reasons. The criticism was part of a dispute with the CMS, as we have seen, and they disapproved of the College, not just on methodological lines, but also on class and theological grounds.

²⁷ Laird Missionaries and Education p.148.

²⁸ Minutes of Bishop's College Council, January 16, 1852 (USPG C.IND.1.11.43B).

Dwarkanath Sein, was also to have been baptised but 'in the course of the week previous he accidentally met with a portion of his family from whom he had withdrawn with Revd Krishnan Mohun Banoorjea within College until his baptism'. Thereafter he was persuaded by his family not to be baptised.²⁹ In fact Bishop's College consistently recruited its missionaries from England and from the professions, university college students, and ministers. The salary of the Principal was a thousand pounds a year, five times the salary of a CMS missionary. Charles Craven, when likely to be transferred from Bishop's College to Madras, refused to go on the grounds that a professorship at Bishop's College was a higher station in life than a mere missionary. Not all SPG missionaries were from a higher class than their CMS colleagues but those appointed to Bishop's College often were. John Henry Newman wrote of A.G. Street (in his candidate's papers) 'He is a gentleman and a man of serious mind and sound doctrinal views.'³⁰

These attacks may well have been unfair to Bishop's College. It should be explained that the College was quite small - in 1839 it had only nine students³¹ - and the majority of these were either Anglo-Indians (i.e. of mixed descent) or

²⁹ Letter, Withers to Campbell, April 8, 1839 (USPG C.IND.1.12.70).

³⁰ As far as class is concerned there may have been some social envy displayed by the CMS missionaries. See S. Piggin, Making Evangelical Missionaries (Sutton Courtenay Press, 1984) pp. 43-4. On the theological front there were also differences. SPG tried to retain its character as a missionary society which represented the full spectrum of Anglican opinion. However there was a certain degree of polarisation between the SPG and the CMS, if only because most evangelicals chose the CMS. Street was said (at least by his enemies) to be 'steeped in tractarianism'.

³¹ Letter, Withers to Campbell, Nov 9, 1839 (USPG C.IND.1.12.75).

'native-born', of British parentage but born in India, and, it was assumed, likely to continue in India. Into this small community native Christians seem to have received a warm welcome. Christian David of Tranquebar, described by Mill as 'our first native probationer for holy orders' was admitted in 1824 two years after the College was founded. Perhaps David was something of an exception - he had been a catechist with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for forty years already and had been appointed by the government of Ceylon to a colonial chaplaincy - but he was promptly ordained Deacon and Priest and was clearly well thought of. 'His presence' wrote Mill, 'has already diffused a spirit among the students which it is highly desirable to encourage and which may lead - under the Divine blessing, to the production of similar fruits almost without limit in other questions (sic) [?quarters] of this vast empire.'³² Five Indian students admitted soon after were clearly made welcome³³ and a College minute expressly stated that it was the intention of the College 'to preserve their (i.e. the Indian students') previous habits of dress and diet as far as they belong to the civil customs of their country and race, unaltered by any adoption to those of the rest of the students, while every other distinction, as far as may be, will cease.'³⁴ There seems, in fact, to have been a genuine understanding of the need to be careful not to alienate the Indian students from

³² Letter, Dr Mill to Rev. A.Hamilton, June 19, 1824 (USPG C.IND. 1.9(i).12).

³³ The minute agreeing to their admission read: 'That the College admit with peculiar pleasure the above students considering this as the first formation of a native class in the College as future Christian teachers of the Hindu population.' Council Minutes for Bishop's College, 28 Oct 1836 (USPG C.IND.1.11.25).

³⁴ *ibid.* It is not clear what this meant as far as caste was concerned, an issue which does not appear to have arisen in the discussion.

their own culture. Principal Withers wrote to the S.P.G. Secretary in 1837, just after the admission of the five new native students that 'it was always the desire of the College to see the national habits of the native converts preserved'.³⁵

On the other hand the Indian students themselves felt that, in some ways, they were being discriminated against in the matter of salary and career prospects. They particularly objected to the fact that they were offered a lower salary than those who were doing the same job and who had had precisely the same education. In 1842 three Indian catechists demanded equal pay with their European colleagues as they differed from them only 'in minor points of dress and colour'.³⁶ All agreed that those who came out from Britain should have enhanced salaries, because, or so it was felt, they needed to live more expensively to maintain their health and reasonable standards of comfort. The dispute was whether Indian students should be offered the same salary as 'native-born' and Anglo-Indian trainees. The Indian students naturally objected to any implication that they were 'cheap labour' simply because they were Indians. On the other hand, the authorities at Bishop's College felt that one of the advantages of Indian workers was precisely that they could live more cheaply than Europeans. The widely recognised view that Indian students would be much more effective as future Christian workers if they remained close to their own people, may have included less reputable financial

³⁵ Letter, Withers to Campbell, January 12, 1837 (USPG C.IND.1.12.51).

³⁶ Letter Chandychurn Audy, Dwarkanath Banoorjea, Banimadhub Mazrondar to Withers, Sept 14, 1842 (USPG C.IND.i.12.94).

considerations.

Whatever the motives for contextual sensitivity and whatever the reasons for the criticism of Bishop's College, raising up a native agency was clearly a test of the College's attitudes. It is often difficult to distinguish between a fear of Hinduism in particular ³⁷ and a wider antipathy to Indian civilisation, or even a simple racialism. Withers and his colleagues at Bishop's College displayed all of these attitudes, and this was increasingly so as time went on. At first, as we have seen, they seemed genuinely pleased to welcome Indian students and showed a degree of sensitivity in handling them. There were also some indications that normal cordial relations with Indians were experienced. Street wrote to SPG headquarters in 1841 with genuine feeling:

It is with much concern that I report the death of the inestimable Venekty, the College steward which occurred on 27th ult. His loss will be irreparable. He was the first convert made at the College, and having resided in it, I believe, 16 years was a safe reference for all points of its internal economy on which a precedent might exist. We all looked on him as a friend rather than a servant.

³⁷ There was little idea amongst Christian missionaries during this period that any positive value should be given to non-Christian religions, particularly not Hinduism. Missionaries of all backgrounds saw Hindu culture as lying within the evil one's domain. This is illustrated by the clause from the Instrument of Foundation of Bishop's College in Calcutta, which refers to 'the many millions of human beings, who are at present enslaved in superstition and delusion and are ignorant of the Name whereby alone they can be saved...(USPG C.IND.1.7.3).

He rather spoilt the effect by going on to say that there was now nobody that he could trust.³⁸

Indeed something less attractive soon surfaced. A couple of years later Withers wrote in a letter to headquarters about his 'mean opinion' of 'all the native assistants'. His disillusioned comment was: 'The great difficulty is that as a body they are not to be trusted, their word cannot be relied upon, nor their work, when they are left to themselves.'³⁹ Perhaps Withers was giving in to the increased conservatism of the times, or simply found it difficult to balance his hopes for the college, the need for more students of whatever race, and his personal prejudices. Equally he may have been wanting to put the stress on the matter of education rather than character, and thus magnify his office. In the same letter he recanted somewhat, qualifying his attack on native workers and exempting especially those who had been educated at the College with regard to their truthfulness. 'They only lack energy' he said. He admitted that many who worked for the mission came originally from the Baptists (he cannot think of much worse to say about them!) and had left the BMS mission not through principle but for hope of better conditions.⁴⁰

Village perspectives

³⁸ Letter, Rev. A.G. Street to Campbell, October 17, 1841 (USPG C.IND.1.18A).

³⁹ Letter, Withers to Campbell, 16 March, 1843 (USPG C.IND.1.12.98).

⁴⁰ *ibid.*

Bishop's College was important as an educational institution, not only because of what went on in the College itself, but because it was the centre of a network of mission stations and schools. In 1826 Charles Craven, newly arrived in Calcutta, reported back to the Rev A. Hamilton, the SPG Secretary, giving a euphoric account of the SPG schools. He reckoned that the average attendance at the schools was something like eighty boys per school, which meant a total of more than 1200 boys under daily instruction. According to Craven, the students in these schools 'would not suffer in a comparison with European youths of the same age'.⁴¹

The purpose of these schools, as defined by the missionaries, remained unfocused or at best mixed. Withers wrote to headquarters, in a letter dated 23 September 1839 (that is, at a time when the work was already well established) about the Christian Seminary, Barripore, a school under the superintendence of the Rev C. Driberg, one of the more successful SPG missionaries. His preliminary remark - 'we are bound to impart the blessings of Christian education to heathen children' seems to suggest a 'civilising' purpose for the school among the 'heathen'. Withers goes on, however, to write at much greater length about the needs of 'the children of our native Christians from among whom we may be able to raise up hereafter valuable catechists and readers'. In other words Withers sees the schools both as essential agents in the process of civilising India and in evangelising it.⁴² Similarly Professor S.C.Malan

⁴¹ Letter, Rev. Charles Craven to Hamilton, April 15, 1828 (USPG C:IND.1.12.2).

⁴² Letter, Withers to Campbell, 23 September 1839, (USPG C:IND.1.12.74).

describing his tour of the SPG mission made shortly before leaving India for furlough, commented on the lack of female education and that even Christian females could not usually read. He felt he would like to bring pressure to bear on the Mission to rectify this. But the concern expressed is not simply a social one. 'It is by converting the mothers when young that we shall have influence over the rising generation' he says.⁴³

It may be asked whether the SPG missionaries really drew much of a distinction between 'civilising' and 'converting'. Withers wrote at a time (1843) of very substantial Church involvement in education in Britain. The Church of England's National Society during this period was educating something like one million day scholars in 17,000 day schools in England.⁴⁴ These schools were often seen as a missionary enterprise amongst those deprived of their Christian heritage. G. Kitson Clark writes of 'the immensity of the effort made in the middle of the century by religious Englishmen from every Church, Dissenting Protestant, Roman Catholic and Church of England, to evangelise and civilise those who seemed to have been deprived of the Christian message.'⁴⁵ The effort of the SPG in India no doubt proceeded on much the same basis.

Despite these general statements the idea of raising a native agency was never far away. Rev C.E. Driberg, an SPG missionary graduate from Bishop's College,

⁴³ Letter, Professor S.C. Malan to Campbell, April 26, 1840 (USPG C:IND 1.13.10).

⁴⁴ G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (London, 1962) p. 174.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 176.

wrote in 1839 concerning the Christian Seminary (a village school) in Barripore for which he was responsible.

The Christian Seminary continues to afford me much gratification, indeed I look upon it as a very important branch of missionary duty and if we are bound to impart the blessings of Christian education to heathen culture - much more so, to the children of our native Christians from among whom we may expect to raise up hereafter valuable catechists and readers...we are much retarded in our work from the want of native assistance.⁴⁶

Other SPG satellite schools had similar aims. At Tolygunge, Rev D.Jones reported that since his taking over the work in 1833 'the schools for instructing heathen children have been closed. There are however two schools still attached to this mission, one for the Christian children and the other for imparting the knowledge of English to heathen children.'⁴⁷ It seems strange that a missionary should be talking about closing schools in those early days. However it was not so much a matter of closing schools as a perceptible shift from 'heathen' schools to schools for Christians. Similarly at Barripore, Christian work began with a school (in 1820) - obviously a school for non-Christians - but when Rev C.E.Driberg took over in 1839, a

⁴⁶ Letter, Withers to Campbell, 23 Sept 1839, citing Driberg. (USPG C.IND.1.12.74).

⁴⁷ Letter, Withers to Campbell, 4 May, 1840, citing Rev. D.Jones and Driberg (USPG C.IND.1.12.78).

Christian boarding school was established. Driberg remarked: 'I hope in time to send out catechists and schoolmasters - two lads of great promise have already been sent out after having received a good Christian education in their own mother tongue.' ⁴⁸

At a later date (1844) a letter from Professor Street makes it clear that the boarding school had not developed into anything very substantial.

A school in Barripore is most urgent. We have 25 Christian boarders, many of them orphans, and nothing but a shed for their shelter, so that hitherto the school doings have been miserable. It is the best station for a Christian Boarding School.⁴⁹

Professor Street was a clear-cut supporter of schools for educating Christians. This was balanced by the fact that he was less enthusiastic than his colleagues about the achievements of the schools to date, particularly as agents of conversion. He wrote to the SPG in 1843 about the school at Argupar, wondering whether the Christian instruction offered was making any impact. Referring to an annual inspection which he had witnessed himself some eighteen months previously he remarked:

I also heard others, great big heathen fellows, complimented on their knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity: and certainly some of them

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Letter, Street to Hawkins, 18 Nov 1844 (USPG C.IND.1.13.76).

would have edified a Sunday School in England - only they did not believe one word of what they repeated.⁵⁰

An interesting parallel case - not all village education provided straightforward opportunities for missionary benevolence - is provided by a report from Professor Slater of Bishop's College, in 1853, about the Female Orphan Institution in Cawnpore. He wrote to the Bishop in Calcutta about the difficulties experienced by the local SPG missionary, Mr Schleicher:

On the following day I accompanied Mr Schleicher to the Female Orphan Institution to be present at their morning prayer and to examine them as to their knowledge of Christianity. I was very sorry to find that they seemed to know nothing about the Gospel History. The first chapter of the Acts had been read in Hindustani by Mr Schleicher and that supplied me with a number of questions respecting the great facts of Redemption: but the children either could not or would not answer a simple question. It was the same with the Church Catechism in which I afterwards examined them: they repeated part of it by heart very well in English, but I could get no answer from them either in English or in Hindustani, when I asked them questions out of what they were repeating. Mr Schleicher told me that what I had experienced was nothing unusual, that they could have answered many of the questions I asked, but that they were

⁵⁰ Letter, Street to Hawkins, Jan 18 1843, (USPG C.IND.1.13.42).

sulky and altogether indifferent about progress in knowledge.⁵¹

Schleicher later defended his conduct of the school and further explained the attitude of the girls in a letter to Hawkins in London.

It was true what I said that they might have answered many of the questions but that being impatient to leave school to get married, as many of their members had shortly before done, they were sulky and indifferent to further progress. How often they have told me during lessons, how many times have they sent deputations to me 'we do not wish to learn any more', 'we wish to leave school' and the like. And with Hindustani girls who have made up their minds to get married, both kindness and severity are alike unavailing.⁵²

Opposition might also be parental, as we can see from evidence from other parts of India. In Ranchi the missionary complained that the numbers of female boarders were few compared with boys as the local Mundas could not see the point in female education. 'Why take all that trouble about a girl? She will only blow another man's fire.' ⁵³ According to the Presbyterian missionaries in Farrukhabad in the Punjab, the chief reason for the failure

⁵¹ Report by Professor Slater to Bishop of Calcutta, 21 February, 1853 (USPG. D.3(A).819).

⁵² Letter, Schleicher to Hawkins (USPG. D.3(A). 1289).

⁵³ C.F.Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG, An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1900, 2 vols (London, 1901) p. 500.

of the girls' schools was 'the almost unanimous opposition of their parents and other adults in the community.' In contrast the opposition to boys' education was suspended (in most cases) because 'our sons can get some high office under Government and, if well educated, they are eligible to almost any position.'⁵⁴ The SPG missionaries followed a policy, as did most missionaries, of extreme care in ensuring that the education provided in their girls' schools did not raise the girls out of their 'proper station' in life. S.S.Kohlkoff of the SPG recorded in 1852:

The boarding school for girls was opened in 1845...Twenty girls are at present maintained in this establishment. They are instructed in reading and writing their own language and learn to spin cotton, mark, knitting...Our care is to see that while a scriptural and useful education is imparted, they are not raised above the position in which they may hereafter be placed, and they are trained to their occupations of domestic economy in which in after life they may be called to attend.⁵⁵

This general idea that academic attainment was not all that important for girls, affected recruitment of staff. When, at a later date (1858) a female school was planned by the SPG for Delhi, with regard to the (women) staff to

⁵⁴ J.P.Alter, 'Presbyterians in Farrukhabad' Part 2, Indian Church History Review vol 10 no 1, June 1976.

⁵⁵ Letter, Rev.C.S.Kohlkoff to SPG Committee in Madras, 25 June 1852 (USPG. d.4(A).148).

be recruited,

Accomplishments are not required - beyond French, Music and singing certainly, and a good knowledge of Church music...needlework and a good plain education. Sound devoted Churchwomen are what is called for who will be willing to devote themselves to what will assuredly be a great work.⁵⁶

But to return to Professor Street. There is evidence that Street saw education not so much as having a latent evangelistic purpose, but rather as something which was owed to Indian Christians - however they might have become Christians - as part of their Christian heritage. Street, for example, thought that it was quite unfair that Christian converts should be brought into the church and then be neglected educationally.

When our friends in England urge the wants of the Society, do beg them to enforce on people the responsibilities incurred by what has been done. It is a prospect from which my heart and mind recoil when I think of what, humanly speaking, the next generation of converts may degenerate to, unless the education which the first converts from their hereditary ignorance cannot give their children, be applied to some few at least everywhere. As far as my voice can go I say 'halt' to expenses for educating the heathen but whatever can be done for the Christian children, or rather for the children of Christians.

⁵⁶ Letter, Mrs Mary Gubbins to Hawkins, 9 May, 1858 (USPG. D.4(A).148).

Indescribable is their condition...People have sent out missionaries, and by them baptised hundreds, not to say thousands of adults, and the children of these become Christians as of course...Can one's responsibility in respect of them be less in its kind than that of a man who begets children naturally. As to any sensible help from the converts themselves it is not to be expected, until Christianity shall have made its way to their heart of hearts, which I fear it cannot be expected to do until some more strenuous exhibition of it has been made.⁵⁷

Despite this broadside, Street realised that there was a demand for education and in a vague sort of way felt that it should be responded to if this was practically possible. Writing again to Hawkins he mentioned that 'in the vicinity of Joyunggar the people are very anxious to have a school. The Magistrate...has spoken to me about it more than once' or again, '...on this side Barripur there is a large school maintained by natives, which they offer to place under our control if we will undertake it, but we cannot for want of a man.'⁵⁸ Obviously invitations of this sort were many and pressing and it seems likely that despite Street's principles they would have been responded to if the means had been available. A year later Street wrote: 'Smith's (i.e. Rev W. O'Brien Smith) school is vastly increased and increasing. He has 150 (heathen) on the books and a regular attendance of 90. The magistrate and

⁵⁷ Letter, Street to Hawkins, 18 November, 1844 (USPG C.IND.1.13.76).

⁵⁸ Letter, Street to Hawkins, Dec 16 1843, (USPG C.IND.1.13.49).

others notice it, and there is talk of attempting a large school there, Government giving the site, if we SPG will undertake it.' He hoped that with a large school 'Natural Theology' could be introduced to the advanced classes, 'and so the way reconnoitred for the declaration of the gospel'.⁵⁹ Two years later Street addressed the issue of the school's cost. 'Mr Smith's school however already entails a cost of about 200 Rs per mensem, teachers included. His zeal and talents deserve support and I should rejoice if any special aid could be procured for the Howrah mission.'

Despite these general appeals, as we have seen from the letter of November 18, 1843, Street made a distinction between schools for the children of converts and schools for the 'heathen' and it is clear where his priorities lay. It was not that he was unenthusiastic about evangelism, but rather that he did not link schools primarily with an evangelistic purpose. Street very much wanted the schools run as Christian schools. He wrote to the Bishop of Calcutta asking for an inspection of the SPG schools, and, typically, made suggestions as to how this might be conducted. He felt that there were important points at issue, and they all tended in the same direction. Christian children must have the preferential treatment they deserved. He wanted them to have special instruction; he wanted heathen festivals (i.e. given as holidays) to be ignored. He wanted orphans and other Christian children to be cared for at the Society's expense. He wanted to know how much money would be saved by excluding heathen from the schools and

⁵⁹ Letter, Street to Hawkins, June 6, 1844, (USPG C.IND.1.13.68).

what the Bishop might think of this policy.⁶⁰ It is worth noting that Street was not necessarily speaking for the majority at this stage. Much about the same time he was petitioning the Bishop, he related, in a letter to the Mission, the way in which a school under K.M.Banerjea's supervision was handed over to the SPG by the Evangelical Society, a local Calcutta-based organisation. Apparently this society had promised some financial support for the school, but after two collections in the Old Church, the Headquarters of the Evangelical Society, a third was refused 'on the ground that the "Old or Mission Church" congregation did not approve of schools for native Christian children'. Street added: 'I leave you to add some notes of exclamation'.⁶¹

In fact Street's view that mission schools should not necessarily be primarily instruments of evangelism was probably not that common. Certainly the evangelical establishment in Calcutta would not, as we have seen, have taken this view. Street was on firmer ground when he joined the chorus of those who were concerned about schools which were educating Indians 'without religion'. The missionaries as a body were clear that they were fighting the battle of the Gospel on two fronts: against the tide of 'heathenism', in which they would have included Hindus and Muslims, and on the other hand, against 'secularism', particularly associated with the

⁶⁰ Letter, Street to Bishop of Calcutta, September 28, 1847 (USPG C.IND.1.13.136A).

⁶¹ Letter, Street to Hawkins, February 7, 1849, (USPG C.IND.1.13.157).

rationalism of the post-French revolution era. In many cases they felt that 'godless schools' were worse than no schools at all, an attitude commonly found in England at the time, of course. Street spoke of a proposed new mission school in Calcutta as 'a post of advantage for missionarizing (sic) amidst the education now so rife without religion'.⁶²

Street's frequent criticism of the local schools was balanced by his own ideas of what might comprise a successful school.⁶³ He wrote to the Society in September, 1848, giving a 'rough sketch' as he calls it, of a proposed Grammar School in Calcutta, to be headed by K.M.Banerjea. He wanted it to be a boarding school for 'Christian boys of pure native extraction' only, with fifty free places and expenses kept deliberately low (that is, not for the elite, though he was prepared to admit the possibility of a hostel charging higher fees for the well-to-do). The school was to be under Bishop's College and tuition was to be 'according to the doctrines of the Church of England'. The course was to include 'theology, history - sacred, ecclesiastical and profane - Indian antiquities, geography, grammar, mathematics.' Instruction was to be in both English and Bengali, with special attention paid to the cultivation of the Bengali language so that the pupils might acquire 'the talent of communicating Christian and European ideas to their countrymen in the

⁶² Letter, Street to Hawkins, 18 October, 1848, (USPG C.IND.13.153).

⁶³ To be fair, Street is not all criticism. He liked Mr de Mello's school at Geonkaly near Tamlook, recording the opinion of his colleague, Rev McQueen, concerning the examination on the Catechism and Gospels that 'in many a village school in England, one would not have obtained better replies'. Letter, Street to Hawkins, 8 April, 1847 (USPG.C.IND.1.13.128).

way that is most agreeable to them'. Greek, Latin and Sanskrit were to be taught to students who could cope. Though the students were not to be bound in any way to the Society it was hoped that a number would go on as students to Bishop's College and also that graduates from Bishop's College would provide the main source of teachers. The reasons given for establishing such a school once again demonstrated a mix of motives. At the head came Street's regular preoccupation with the children of converts. There was, without the school, 'no means of instructing the children of educated converts' (except 'the Dissenting institutions!'). The second reason was the provision of potential jobs for Bishop's College graduates, especially 'pure born native youths'. Only then came the more general purpose: 'such an institution would afford manifold opportunities for working on the heathen mind'.⁶⁴ The proposal and the reasons behind it were backed up by Professor George Weidemann who says: 'we are bound to educate them [native Christians] in the principles of the Christian faith and while there are scientific, literary but infidel schools all over the country, we should give our young converts the advantages of the ordinary branches of education, on a solid religious basis...But the principal advantage...is that it will give employment to our native students if...the masters are educated at the College'.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Letter, Street to Hawkins, 18 September 1848 (USPG C.IND.1.13.151).

⁶⁵ Letter, Professor George Weidemann to Hawkins, 7 October 1848 (USPG C.INDIA.1.13.188).

The question arises as to whether Street's preoccupation with the education of the children of Christians reflected his 'High' churchmanship. It may be so. His view of a Christian civilisation no doubt encouraged him to put a primary stress on the role played by the church in socialising its young people. This would have taken a higher place than the Evangelical emphasis on 'converting the heathen'. On the other hand, there were plenty of thinkers of all sorts in the Church of England – whether High Church, Tractarian or Evangelical – who would not have questioned the idea of a Christian civilisation and who themselves were perfectly familiar with the idea of parish schools and religious education. Disputes in England tended not to be about the value of religious education, but about what sort of religious education it should be. Just to take one example, while Bishop Wilson and Street were clearly opposed on some doctrinal issues, they may have been quite near in their understanding of the nature of the church's role in society and in education. Wilson was very quick to define his sphere of influence in Calcutta and to assert his rights as a bishop. He clashed with Governor General Bentinck on this issue, ('Lord William reverences religion, and its sincere professors and ministers, but he has prejudices against bishops, ecclesiastical establishments and national churches.'), particularly over rival claims for jurisdiction over military chaplains. He quarrelled with the CMS for asserting its independence of Episcopal authority, and, as we have seen, with the SPG for not toeing the line doctrinally.⁶⁶ Behind this lay a sincere belief that the church and state were inseparable allies in a

⁶⁶ Bateman, Life of Wilson vol. 1 pp. 329, 373, vol. 2 pp.10-21, 261.

Christian nation. On one occasion, in a charge to his clergy, having described a right functioning church, he added 'And where the State supports such a Church, expands it with the increase of Christian population, and protects with mild laws the decencies of religion and the sanctity of the Sabbath, the benefits are immense. They are the means of salvation...' ⁶⁷ There is certainly no evidence that Wilson, an Evangelical, had any doubts about schools for Christian children as a priority.

Bishop's College: the wider setting

The impression that the staff of Bishop's College often gave, even when they were also involved with the satellite schools, was of a certain insularity. The work of teaching and supervision was all absorbing and events from outside the sphere of College work were not much mentioned. (There were, of course exceptions. Principal Kay commented at length on the Indian Mutiny, for example.) Nevertheless the College and its schools did not operate in a vacuum. Staff were aware of the 'Renaissance' in Calcutta; other Christian work could not be completely ignored - even the despised Baptists came into the picture; the need to employ Indian staff in the College and not just European missionaries was debated, and their employment brought a closer contact with the community; relationships with the religious establishment in Calcutta - the Bishop, other Anglican worthies and the 'Christian' public - could not be ignored, and, as we have seen, the admission of students who

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.391.

were not specifically being trained for the ministry raised wider issues.

'The opening of the native mind'

W.H.Mill was aware that considerable changes were going on in Calcutta amongst the educated classes and that Christian education was a contributor to this process. He described this rather grandiosely as the 'opening of the native mind'. He was impressed by the new desire on the part of the Indian public for learning, 'their curiosity respecting other manners and histories and their own desire to learn English...and to read every shastra of ours, when considered as a part of English education'. He was also impressed by 'the introduction of native newspapers in their own language'. Mill believed that 'superstition', as he thought of Hindu religious practice, was in the process of being undermined by those who had not necessarily become Christians but had adopted 'the principles of natural religion'. He was of course referring to the Brahmo Samaj and similar movements. He was careful, however, to point out that Ram Mohun Roy, the Brahmo Samaj's founder, was on the wrong side in his celebrated disagreement with the Baptists over 'The Precepts of Jesus'. His view was that Roy had set 'the morality of the gospel against its mysteries'. Mill saw the beliefs of people like Ram Mohun Roy only as sufficient to undermine superstition; those people 'are not enlightened as to the remedy wanted for the evils they discern'.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Letter, Mill to the Society, July 29, 1822 (USPG C.IND.1.9(i).3).

Mill here revealed himself to be a typical product of the Enlightenment, setting 'the principles of natural religion' against 'superstitions'. Yet this was precisely what the Eighteenth Century 'philosophes' thought they were doing in their day, and as a trend it led to the rational destruction of religion in Europe, even though the early protagonists of the Enlightenment would have claimed that they were in harmony with religion rather than in opposition to it. The 'mysteries' of the faith, referred to by Mill as something Roy did not understand or had not entered into, could also possibly be undermined by rationalism.

A missionary college?

The biggest debate in the life of the College, as time went by, was over its purpose. There were a number of factors which tended to divert it from the original intention that it should be a missionary training college. In particular, it was difficult to prevent the missionary purpose of the College from being overtaken by a more general educational purpose, when throughout its history the College found it difficult to recruit sufficient men for the ministry. It was widely agreed that there should be native missionaries trained in the College, indeed it was written into the Statutes as one of the College's specific aims, but there was constant pressure both from the SPG in London and from people like Bishop Heber in Calcutta to change those aims. If not enough native-born Christians were coming forward to be

trained as missionaries to their own people it was felt that the College should abandon its specific purpose as a theological institution altogether and simply become a College offering higher education for whoever might lay claim to it. There was in fact a move in this direction in 1851. This statutes were revised to include the extension of 'education, on sound principles, to all classes of the country'. This was not as radical as it sounded, as we have seen ⁶⁹, because entry was restricted to members of the Church of England, but as the years went by there was undoubtedly a decline in the College's missionary purpose. In the official history of the SPG written in 1901 the final comments on the College were: 'As time went on the leading object of the College – the training of Mission agents – began to be neglected, and in 1871 the Society, finding that the efforts of the tutors had for some years been directed to preparing Christian students for Calcutta university, took steps for restoring the purely missionary character of the institution.' ⁷⁰ Apparently this was not a success. The buildings were sold as it was judged that they were too grand, and therefore a hindrance for the training of mission agents. The College relocated to a site in Calcutta proper in 1880 and achieved some stability under Henry Whitehead, the future Bishop of Madras.⁷¹ It is clear from this account that the issue of the suitability of the training on offer, which has been another theme of our study, was also still being debated at this late date.

⁶⁹ See above p. 145.

⁷⁰ Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG p. 476.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

In summary, the College began with a very specific purpose. It intended to train Indians to be Christian missionaries to their own people. The curriculum was designed with this in mind, and, in particular, the policy with regard to languages was that students should use their own vernaculars as a missionary tool. Bishop's College struggled to fulfil this aim. There were insufficient candidates coming forward for training (not surprisingly, considering the embryonic state of the Indian church) and the differences between College staff, some suspected of Tractarianism, and the Evangelicals in Calcutta, added to this difficulty. Also, the training was probably too long and too demanding. Here the 'clerical' nature of the SPG and its emphasis on an ordained 'professional' leadership may have told against the College. In a similar vein there was considerable concern, both inside and outside the College, that Indian students were being alienated from their own cultures. Whatever the truth of these matters, and the College may not have had an entirely 'fair press' from people like Bishop Wilson and other Evangelicals, what is certain is that the primary aim of raising up an extensive trained Christian ministry for work in India was not achieved.

Village schools were partly seen as having an evangelistic and socialising purpose, but they were also considered essential as 'feeders' for Bishop's College and because they provided employment opportunities for College graduates. There was debate over whether the schools were primarily for 'heathen' or Christian children, but on the whole the latter was considered

the more appropriate option, though it was admitted that there was a general demand for education which needed to be met if possible. In any case 'secular' education was not an option. Staff at Bishop's College itself could see that even at the College there might be opportunities for reaching out more widely than to the fledgling church, and the local Anglican establishment was less keen on the missionary purpose of the College as time went on. As a result the debate over the purpose of the College was never really settled and its original aim of training up a 'native agency' became less clear.

In some significant ways the fate of Bishop's College was similar to that of Serampore College. Pressures from outside both Colleges subverted their original aims. Their success depended on the patient building up of a Christian constituency through village churches and vernacular schools and on their willingness to be part of that process through the provision of appropriate training for church leaders and teachers. The slowness of the growth of the church, the need to respond to the demand for English medium education and the overall 'top-down' approach, made it difficult for them to play their part. The influence of the Scottish missionaries, especially Alexander Duff, did not help others to pursue this strategy. Their apparently successful policy was to concentrate educational resources on the wealthy, upper-caste, non-Christian population in English medium schools. Whether it was truly successful in terms of the long-term goals of missionary education is a question which this study raises.

Chapter 6: Missionary education and government

The question of the aims of missionary education was clarified in many instances by the relation of missionary education to government education. This was because the two systems were often rivals and yet rivals that could in some aspects be seen as allies. The whole missionary enterprise - not just education - was sometimes seen by both missionary and government officer alike (as well as by representatives of the local population) as part of one grand scheme to civilise India, something which was equally the responsibility of government and church agency. Or again, particularly as time went on, there was an apparent complicity between missionary and government, aimed at subverting Indian culture and promoting British imperialism. This last idea gained added credence in that the missionaries themselves often appealed to government for help on the grounds that their work was an aid to Empire.

Alexander Duff writing in 1845, by which time he had become something of a spokesman for the missionary education cause, was quite happy to remind government that the education of India was in the government's interest. He commended the sentiments of Charles Grant and his 'Observations' (originally in 1792 but re-issued in 1813) which spoke of 'planting our language, our knowledge, our opinions, and our religion, in our Asiatic territories'. Half of Grant's argument was expediency: by means of this policy 'we shall probably have wedded the inhabitants of these territories to this country'. The other half was philanthropy: 'we shall have done an act of strict duty to them, and a lasting service to mankind'. Grant also frankly admitted that 'in every

progressive step of this work, we shall also serve the original design with which we visited India, that design still so important to this country; - the extension of our commerce'.¹

Allies or rivals?

In what sense were missionaries and government rivals? The earliest phases of the missionary enterprise encountered a good deal of hostility from the East India Company. The response, in 1792, of the directors of the East India Company to William Wilberforce's plea for 'missionaries and schoolmasters' was simply that 'the Hindus had as good a system of faith and morals as most people...it would be madness to attempt their conversion or to give them any more learning or any other description of learning than that which they already possessed.'²

On the other hand, as Andrew Porter has pointed out, it was often true that the missionaries were not all that impressed by the prospect of working with the government. Lessons were drawn from history. The Jesuits had languished, while the Moravians had prospered. Was this precisely because of the presence and absence of government links respectively? The state was in any case seen as largely ineffective in enforcing religion, and the nonconformist element, which took the lead in the first missionary societies, wanted to see its

¹ A.Duff, 'Early or exclusively oriental period of Government education in Bengal' in Calcutta Review Vol. 3 No.6, 1845 pp. 211-63.

² Cited in Arthur Mayhew, The Education of India (London, 1926) p. 10.

powers diminished both at home and abroad. As William Carey had pointed out 'means' were at hand whatever the attitude of government. The voyages of Captain Cook, for example, inspired people to believe that they could set up expeditions to distant parts without necessarily becoming government servants. The first missionaries were often skilled artisans who displayed remarkable self-reliance.³ In any case missionaries already belonged to a community, the church, which was international and universal.⁴

Missionary 'independence' no doubt often displeased the government. Even after 1813 when, at the renewal of the Charter Act there was some encouragement given to the missionaries, there continued to be a good deal of opposition to missionary work in European circles on the grounds that it unnecessarily upset the natives. The view that the 'door was flung open' to missions in 1813 has to be received with caution. On one hand missionaries were quite active in India before 1813. They were few (36 by 1813) but the main obstacle to extending the number up to this point was probably recruitment. Those in India were usually there with the cognisance and even the blessing of the East India Company. There were no guarantees, however, and a conservative Governor General or the fear of sedition might change the

³ Good examples might be William Bowden and George Beer, stonemason and cobbler respectively, who, with their wives, founded the Godaveri Delta Mission. They arrived in the Godaveri in 1836 as 'pioneer' missionaries; a century later the Mission consisted of hundreds of village churches and some seven to eight thousand Christians. See Paul Hyland, Indian Balm: Travels in the Southern Subcontinent (London, 1994) p. 2, 34 and W.T.Stunt, et al. Turning the World Upside Down (Bath, 1972) pp. 99-100).

⁴ Andrew Porter, 'Religion and Empire: British Expansion in the Long Nineteenth Century, 1780-1914' in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History XX no.3, September 1992, p. 377.

situation. Specific events such as the Vellore mutiny of 1806 increased the government's caution. After 1813 the situation was not markedly different. Missionaries still had to obtain a license from the Court of Directors and, as Penny Carson has shown, there could be outright hostility to missionaries and their work if they were deemed to be 'upsetting the natives'. Dissenters were unpopular with the Church of England who had an increasing presence in India after 1813.⁵ In general, 'official' reactions could be unpredictable. A dispute over lectures in Alexander Duff's house intended for the students of the Hindu College provides an example. By an order of the College, signed by, among others H.H.Wilson, David Hare and Russomay Dutt, the students were prohibited from attending these lectures. A fierce debate followed in the Calcutta press.⁶ This was in 1831 when it might have been thought that the tide was flowing swiftly in favour of missionary activity in India.

It is true that the prejudice against the missionaries remained strong, particularly amongst those with some experience of India, but there also followed a period in which the influence of the Evangelical party in Britain was sufficiently strong for the prospect to emerge of a full blooded alliance between the missionaries and a new breed of incoming administrators in the Indian government. The missionaries often found that in practice they needed government. Social reforms, for example, needed government enactments. One

⁵ The limits of the Company's tolerance are well summarised in P. Carson, India and the Awakening of the Christian Conscience (North Atlantic Missiology Project, Position Paper 14, p. 5)

⁶ See Asiatic Journal Vol iv New series 1831 in the section 'Asiatic Intelligence' pp. 73ff.

of the reasons why the abolition of *sati* alarmed educated Hindu opinion was the apparent alliance between government and missionaries, not to mention radical Westernised Indian intellectuals. Macaulay's famous intervention which helped to secure the triumph of the Anglicising party - and which led to English becoming the medium of higher education in India - was not specifically the work of an Evangelical Christian - Macaulay was no such thing, though his father Zacchary was. However, the result was hailed with delight by educationists such as Alexander Duff who believed that English medium education would indeed subvert Hinduism and lead to the wholesale conversion of the nation to the Christian faith.

Many of the missionaries clearly felt that the Imperial Government, simply because it was British and therefore, in the understanding of the day, Christian, should be supporting the missionaries in their endeavour to Christianise India, and in particular to offer a Christian education. Indeed this often went further. They hoped for representatives of Government who were positively *enthusiastic* about the spread of Christianity. This was not impossible. We might take as an example of the enthusiastic imperial Christian officer (though it is noteworthy that this is not an *Indian* example) W.B.Martin, the Resident at Amboyna. Martin wrote to William Carey in the Autumn of 1813, 'I earnestly beg you to concert measures for sending a respectable and pious missionary to Amboyna. The advantages would be incalculable. There are schools already established, churches, and every thing the most enlightened friend of humanity could desire, and there is now a person at the Head of Administration who would consider it a sacred duty to

render you all the assistance in his power.' ⁷ It is doubtful whether any official of the Indian Government could have written so frankly, whatever their personal convictions. In fact many in the Government remained suspicious of the missionary enterprise. Despite encouraging signs (after 1813) that attitudes sympathetic to missionary work were gaining ground, the government's stance remained at the very least one of 'neutrality'. It was the role of government not to side with any one religion but to hold the ring, administering the nation impartially. As the century progressed, the influence of the Evangelical party in Britain became less. Ecclesiastically this more or less coincided with the Tractarian movement after 1833 and politically with the close of the age of Reform in the 1840s. This had predictable knock-on effects in India. Also, the response to the Indian Mutiny, as we shall see, tended to divide rather than unite government and missionaries. It was only towards the end of the century when evangelical expectations were supplemented by a sort of 'high imperialism' that once again the possibility emerged of a 'Christian government' working with the missionaries. By this time missionaries were more respectable and, sadly often shared the government's disrespect for non-European cultures.⁸

Even here mutual suspicion was more likely the order of the day. Government support for the missionary cause was 'mentioned in despatches' but was probably more in the minds of missionaries than government. S.S.Allnutt, of

⁷ Angus Library, Letter W.B.Martin, Resident of Amboyna to William Carey, Autumn 1813.

⁸ Porter, 'Religion and Empire' p. 382.

the CMD, commented in 1890 'our Christian rulers are beginning to take a bolder line, to see the need of putting Christian Education in its right place, as the dominant factor on which we must rely for raising India out of her present state of moral weakness and intellectual lethargy'. But Allnutt, as usual, was over optimistic. Also he represented an Anglican University mission.

Nonconformists would have been less sanguine, particularly the new style adherents of the 'faith missions' who tended to see government as 'worldly' and even corrupt. The missionaries as a whole continued to be aggrieved at the government's 'secular' stance in education and were confident that they were doing a better job than the government in the educational field. The 1910 Conference at Edinburgh showed a remarkable unity on this point. Indeed unity was one thing which they believed that they had, while 'the nations' were divided. Finally, the 'fulfilment' theory in religion, now rapidly gaining ground, meant, for some, sympathetic contact with educated Indians just at a time when the government was moving away from this policy.⁹ This applied to only a small group of missionaries - C.F.Andrews is the obvious, but not the only, example - but they were vocal enough to make the government uncomfortable, and even hostile.

Early days: South India

The various tensions in government-missionary relationships up to the Mutiny are well illustrated by R.E.Frykenberg's study of government education in

⁹ See below p. 306 n. 17.

South India up to 1854.¹⁰ The missionaries had entered education confidently in South India during the eighteenth century through the pioneer work of German Pietists such as Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau and there were major expansions under dynamic leaders such as C.F.Schwarz and later, in the early nineteenth century, C.T.E.Rhenius. Pietist education was, however, of a certain type. It was village education primarily, aimed at the poor, or at least the mixing of high and low, and guided by a curriculum that would be 'practical', that is a training in skilled occupations rather than a 'literary' education.¹¹ The Company encouraged the missionaries' work and it also received Indian royal patronage. Government's own initiatives were less certain. The idea of educational provision was popular and there was a growing feeling, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, that this it would help to combat the perceived low standards of government officials. Andrew Bell in Madras,¹² Alexander Ross at Cuduppah, and James Hough at Palamcottah were all involved in educational schemes. The government tended to vacillate, however, or it did so until the governorship of the dynamic Thomas Munro, (Governor of Madras from 1820-7). He ordered a general survey of educational provision (1823-5) and then initiated an extensive scheme in 1826, embracing all aspects of education. Munro died in 1827 and his scheme foundered as his disciples struggled to maintain his vision against the apathy

¹⁰ R.E.Frykenberg, 'Modern Education in South India 1784-1854: its roots and its role as a vehicle of integration under Company Raj' in American Historical Review, 91,1 (Feb 1986).

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 41.

¹² Andrew Bell was in charge of the Orphan Asylum in Madras from 1789-96. He introduced a monitorial system and then transferred the idea to Britain, where 'the Madras system of education' had considerable influence.

of their superiors.

What emerged also was a divergence of opinion in educational circles as to aims. There was a significant growth of demand in Madras itself from the 'higher classes' for government education. In 1839 there was an Education Petition drafted by the leaders of the Hindu Literary Society (a society founded in 1830 to represent the needs and aspirations of Hindu gentry) demanding that the government take up its responsibility to provide education, and including a clause aimed at missionary schools and colleges where students were obliged 'to act as if they renounced the religious faith in which they [had] been brought up'.¹³ The idea of government sponsored non-missionary education was further promoted by the Pachaiyappa Education Trust (set up in 1839) an extremely well endowed, permanent and self-perpetuating trust to be used exclusively for education and controlled by well-to-do Indian trustees. The education envisaged was resolutely elitist. In this the Court of Directors in London concurred.

[Efforts] to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of any people...concern the education of the higher classes, of persons possessing leisure and natural influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction among these classes, you would...produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope

¹³ The petition is recorded in: George Norton, Native Education in India : Comprising a Review of its State and Progress within the Presidency of Madras (Madras, 1848) cited by Frykenberg, 'Modern Education' p. 34.

to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class. ¹⁴

Certain groups opposed this lobby. The Pietist educators, as we have seen, had always had a different philosophy. Furthermore there had been notable 'mass conversions' in South India among the lower castes in recent memory ¹⁵ and there was a new confidence among the missionaries. Also, the founding of John Anderson's school, the Scottish Free Church School, in 1837, introduced another factor. Anderson was directly in the Duffite tradition and his school was aimed at an elitist clientele, with an English medium education based on a 'Western' curriculum. But he was also very much concerned to win converts. The schooling he provided was thought to be highly desirable by even the most influential families in Madras and in due course Anderson had no difficulty in filling his school (which went on to become the India-wide famous Madras Christian College) but the conversion of some of the students and a resolute stand against caste were (naturally) unpopular with many Hindu families. This further persuaded the Hindu gentry to press for government schools of a similar standard, but which were 'neutral' in religious matters.

By the 1840s there were clear lines of conflict drawn. The two governors who succeeded Munro, Stephen Lushington and Sir Frederick Adam, were lukewarm about 'higher education' believing it to be too pro-Hindu. Lord

¹⁴ Court of Directors to Government of Madras, Sep 29, 1830 Cited in Frykenberg, 'Modern Education' p. 49.

¹⁵ See below chapter 7.

Elphinstone (Governor from 1837-42) was much more enthusiastic and he was supported by some able men, particularly George Norton. This was also the era of the Education Petition and the Pachaiyappa Trust. A 'High School' was founded in Madras which was to be administered by a University Board with the intention of it developing in due course into the first University of Madras. The plans very much included co-operation with the local notables and it was therefore designed as a 'trickle down' enterprise, with no concessions given to an ideal of education which mixed the castes or favoured the 'lower' elements in the society. Norton's comment was: 'Light must touch the mountain tops before it pierces to the depths'.¹⁶ Moreover specific assurance were given that there would be no religious teaching that would be offensive to the public at large.

The plans of Elphinstone and Norton were thwarted by the next Governor, Lord Tweeddale (Governor 1842-47) ¹⁷ who was against the expansion of government higher education and keen to support private (i.e. missionary) education. Tweeddale effectively wrecked the plans for the upgrading of the Madras High School and enraged his opponents by announcing his plans to introduce the Bible as a textbook in all national schools. The case of a girl convert in Anderson's school, who sought and was granted Christian asylum through the courts, further inflamed the situation as did the fact that in 1846 serious disturbances between Christians and Hindus in Tirunelveli District

¹⁶ A.Arbutnot, Papers Relating to Instruction in the Madras Presidency (Madras, 1855) cited by Frykenberg, 'Modern Education' p. 55.

¹⁷ See below pp.212-13 where we encounter Lord Tweeddale in the context of the missionary demand for 'the Bible in schools' after the Indian Mutiny.

also came to court in Madras. When the judges found two to one in favour of the Hindu faction, Tweeddale promptly dismissed all three judges! In October 1846 a huge crowd assembled in Madras and a petition was signed, with some 12,000 signatures, protesting against recent attacks on the religion of the 'local inhabitants of Madras'. It was sent directly to the Court of Directors in London.

These events indicate that the Madras Presidency was something of an exception. Missionary education had made an early start, and had gone further than government provision.¹⁸ Advocates of state support wanted the balance redressed particularly by means of more government support for (higher) English education. This was frankly aimed at the maintenance of elite dominance, as we have seen. The missionaries and their supporters, even allowing for the attitudes of the Free Church of Scotland educators, had a substantially different approach. Neither side could entirely command events in Madras. What the government would not do was to 'interfere with religion' and what it preferred on the whole was to placate the interests of the powerful elements in Hindu society that they needed in order to carry on peaceful government. This was something of a dilemma for the missionaries if they wished to continue to work with the government. They found it very difficult to conceive that there was such a thing as 'secular' education. Somehow Christianity must be brought in. In corresponding with sympathetic

¹⁸ Frykenberg points out that Madras was the only Presidency where private enrolments were far higher than government ones, at least up to the middle of the century. Frykenberg, 'Modern Education' p. 64.

government officials (like Mountstuart Elphinstone) John Wilson of Bombay, for example, recommended that government schools seek to 'connect human and divine science in the instruction of its youth'. He agreed that it might be wise for the government to avoid 'hortative' (emphasis Wilson's) teaching of Christianity, but Christianity's 'historical relation' should be taught and the pupils given 'free access to its unerring standards'.¹⁹ Wilson was deeply concerned that 'secular' education would be inadequate at the most crucial level, that of imparting morality. Writing to the Governor of Ceylon in 1841 he complained that 'our boards of education [in India]...despise and disparage religion, the only available engine of moral reform'; he added 'were their endeavours not in some degree supplemented by our Christian missions, I should be disposed to question their ultimate safety'.²⁰

In this uneasy relationship between missionaries and government there was one further big question. Could the missionaries expect any financial support from the government in their educational work? This was added to the question already raised. Would the government schools remain 'neutral' in religious matters? Rev H.C.Tucker wrote to the Secretary of Gorrahpur Church Mission Association in July 1848 describing his negotiations with government.²¹ Firstly, Tucker appealed to the government for financial support. He made no attempt to disguise the fact that his school was a

¹⁹ G.Smith, The Life of John Wilson (London, 1878) p. 259.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 60.

²¹ Letter from Rev. H.C.Tucker to Rev. J.P.Kinge, Secretary to Gorrahpore (sic) Church Mission Association, July 31, 1848 (CMS).

Christian institution, but he made it clear that, though the Bible was taught at certain (fixed) times, attendance at the classes was not compulsory. The government refused the request. Secondly Tucker pressed upon the government that they should themselves initiate half an hour a day non compulsory religious education (as the first item of the day) in government institutions. Failing here again, Tucker determined to start an 'independent school upon a Christian basis'.

This interchange neatly illustrates the situation as already described. The missionaries wanted financial aid for their schools, without of course forfeiting the right to include religious education in the curriculum; they also wanted government schools to include religious instruction. On the latter point the government felt that this would breach their policy of 'neutrality', which was already clearly formulated. In this they had important *political* considerations in mind. They felt that the local population would object if government money (raised from taxes on Hindus and Muslims) was used for Christian education in government schools. They knew full well that, while education was popular, Christianity was not. In the letter of Tucker's already referred to, there is a reminder that any school which was seen as a specifically Christianising influence walked a tightrope. The school founded by Tucker (mentioned above) usually had about 150 students. It reduced rapidly, however, to 111 when the arrival of a new missionary teacher from England meant that there was 'a greater stress on Christian instruction'. One response to this, wrote Tucker,

was 'the establishment of an opposition school in the mosque in the City'. ²²

The Princely States

How were the various fears and aspirations of both missionaries and government to be resolved? Before we consider this in detail, it is worth reminding ourselves of the fact that considerable areas of India were in fact still ruled by 'the princes'. One of the points frequently stressed by the missionaries was that there were several examples of Princely states, with 'pagan' governments, who were very keen on Christian education, and who saw no difficulty in supporting missionary schools and colleges with government money. Just to cite one example, Mrs Ellen Etherington wrote enthusiastically from Benares:

I cannot give as much of my own time to the Zenanas as I should like to because I have to attend to several large schools in the city of which I have the superintendence. These are supported entirely by the Raja of Vizianagram who takes a great interest in their work. I have nearly four hundred pupils in these schools, including in one of them about thirty women, most of whom are being trained for teachers...The children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, and natural history, and also needlework and singing. They read several religious books, including part of the Scriptures and the 'Peep of Day' [a book of

²² *ibid.*

Christian meditations] which was translated into Hindi by dear Mr Parsons just before he died.²³

Dick Kooiman gives another valuable account of non-British Government grants-in-aid ²⁴ relating to the South Travancore's government's negotiations with the LMS for a 'grants-in-aid' system. Christian schools were particularly important in this instance as caste restrictions excluded most of the Christian converts from the government (sirkar) schools.

The Wood Despatch

Two events in the 1850s, one to do specifically with education and one political, had a major bearing on the relationship between missionaries and government. The first was the Wood Educational Despatch (1854), and the second the Indian Mutiny (1857).

The Wood Despatch claimed that the Government had always pursued and would continue to pursue a policy of 'absolute neutrality' in religious matters. Thus:

Considerable misapprehension appears to exist as to our views with respect to religious instruction in the Government institutions. Those

²³ The letter is not dated but Mrs Etherington was in India between 1862 and 1884.

²⁴ D.Kooiman, Conversion and Social Equality in India, the L.M.S. in South Travancore in the Nineteenth Century, (New Delhi, 1989) pp. 87-94.

institutions were founded for the benefit of the whole population of India; and, in order to effect their object, it was, and is, indispensable that the education conveyed in them be exclusively secular. The Bible is, we understand, placed in the libraries of the colleges and schools, and the pupils are able freely to consult it. This is as it should be; and moreover, we have no desire to prevent, any explanations which the pupils may, of their own free will, ask from their masters upon the subject of the Christian religion, providing that such information be given out of school hours. Such instruction being entirely voluntary on both sides, it is necessary, in order to prevent the slightest suspicion of an intention on our part to make use of the influence of Government for the purpose of proselytism, that no notice shall be taken of it by inspectors in their periodical visits.²⁵

This was a notably clear statement. However, alongside the maintenance of the principle of neutrality in government institutions, the government was prepared to support with government money educational enterprises run by voluntary associations. This specifically did not exclude religious organisations. Indeed the government was probably well aware that these organisations would be primarily religious in character. This was the pattern in Britain at the time. The government clearly indicated that they were hoping that the *chief* burden of the education of the nation would ultimately fall to voluntary associations, and that this was something which the government desired to promote. So much ink was spilt at a later date about these clauses

²⁵ S.Nurrullah and J.P.Naik, A History of Education in India During the British period Second edition (Bombay, 1951) p. 211.

in the Despatch, that is, the clauses relating to the government withdrawing from education in favour of voluntary associations, that they are quoted here at length.

The most efficient method of providing for the wants of India [in education] will be to combine with the agency of government the aid which may be derived from the exertions and liberality of the educated and wealthy natives of India and of other benevolent persons.

We have therefore resolved to adopt in India the system of Grants-in-Aid...and we confidently anticipate, by thus drawing support from local resources, in addition to contributions from the State, a far more rapid progress of education than would follow a mere increase of expense by the Government; while it possesses the added advantage of fostering a spirit of reliance upon local exertions and combination for local purpose, which is of itself of no mean importance to the well being of a nation.

We desire to see local management under Government inspection, and assisted by Grants-in-Aid, taken advantage of whenever it is possible to do so, and that no Government College or Schools shall be founded in future, in any district where a sufficient number of institutions exist, capable, with assistance from the State, of supplying the local demand for education.

We look forward to the time when any general system of Education entirely provided by Government may be discontinued, with the gradual advance of the system of Grants-in-Aid, and when many of the existing Government Institutions, especially those of the higher order, may be safely closed or transferred to the management of local bodies under the control of and aided by the State.²⁶

The Wood despatch of course was not created *ex nihilo*. In some ways it merely formalised a debate which had been going on for some time. Consider for example, the resolutions passed as a result of a paper read by J.M.Strachan on the subject of 'The Education of India' in April, 1852, at a conference in London of the SPCK, the SPG and the CMS 'on the renewal of the powers to the Honourable East India Company'. These resolutions neatly summarised the relationship with government. Firstly, if the government (i.e. the East India Company) was setting aside money for properly maintained and inspected schools 'to promote good general Education...among all classes of the inhabitants of India, then every school which has reached the required standard (i.e. including mission schools) should be entitled to benefit from the procedure'. Secondly, the Government should make no move 'to prevent Scripture being taught in these schools'.²⁷

A few months later the Bishop of Madras responded to the findings of the

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ Printed Proceedings of a Joint Conference between SPCK, SPG, CMS on the occasion of the renewal of powers to the Honourable East India Company. 1852, London (USPG D.4(A).145).

conference with a protest (aimed at the government rather than the missionary societies) that 'a Christian Government should absolutely exclude Christianity from their institutions and prohibit their teachers from referring to it in their teachings.' The policy could easily be corrected 'by appointing teachers to lecture on the facts - doctrines and evidences of Christianity - the attendance of the classes being voluntary and by the introduction of the Bible and religious books into the Libraries to which scholars have free access.' ²⁸ The Bishop also believed that the grants-in-aid system should be extended in India along the lines of the British system.

Thus a number of those concerned with education in India were already talking about the need of a grants-in-aid system well before the arrival of the Wood Despatch in 1854, and were prepared to appeal to the British model. Also, the Bishop's remarks about the use of the Bible typified Enlightenment thinking. He clearly believed that 'the facts' could be distinguished and kept separate from 'the experience'. Nor was this merely an academic point. The typical Enlightenment dichotomy between facts and values again and again bedevilled the debate. Was there such a thing as value free education? Was not even 'secular education' embedded in a particular world view? This was a debate to which we will return²⁹ but as a contrast to the Bishop's ideas we can cite a CMS pamphlet written in 1858, in the immediate aftermath of the

²⁸ Bishop of Madras, responding to the findings of the joint conference of the SPG, SPCK, CMS. Letter to Hawkins at SPG, 5 August 1852 from Madras. (USPG D.4(A).157).

²⁹ See below pp. 254-6.

Mutiny. The pamphlet more or less accepted that *Government* education might indeed have contributed to the unrest that led to the Mutiny. But this was because it was 'secular education'. It was not the abandoning of the principle of neutrality but its adoption in the first place that had caused the trouble. The Government could solve its problems by 'ceasing to proclaim a neutrality in education which is incompatible with the first elements of real knowledge; or venturing to teach what is false.' A footnote spelled this out in more detail.

We are a Christian nation, and naturally must wish that all others believed as we do...In education neutrality is impossible; you cannot give the simplest lesson of geography without contradicting the Hindoo religious books. If our geography etc etc be true, the religion based upon them must be false. This is the inference drawn for himself by every young man who passes through a Government college.

The solution, of course proposed by the author was the continuation, indeed extension, of grants-in-aid schools, whereby the State might still be involved in the educational process and yet truly moral education might also be offered and/or the introduction of moral (i.e. Christian) education as an element in Government institutions. An appendix compared the three types of education -

1. the Christian Missionary schools and Government schools modified by the Christian influences of the teachers
2. the Government secular colleges, unmitigated by collateral Christian influences and
3. the popular literature of Bengal - the fruit of native education, undisturbed by any extraneous

interference, or foreign correctives.³⁰

It was a by-product of this whole discussion that the missionary authors again and again attempted to show that Christian education was not just beneficial to the natives but also to the maintenance of Empire. A typical apologia might be the following, taken from Raikes' Notes on the Revolt in the North-Western Provinces. 'Again every Missionary sent to the banks of the Ganges, is not only the herald of truth, but also of good government. So far as the Christian teacher rightly educates the heathen mind, he not only fulfils the great commands of his Divine Master, but also incidentally aids and supports the British rule.'³¹

A cautious welcome

This was post-Mutiny writing. When the Wood Despatch was promulgated in 1854 on the whole it received a cautious welcome from the missionaries, who may have felt that a new era of missionary-government cooperation was about to dawn. For one thing they needed the money. Dr (later Bishop) Caldwell, of the SPG, who had wide experience in education in the Madras Presidency, had been away on extended furlough during the introduction of the grants-in-aid scheme, but, on his return, he was quick to express his appreciation of the

³⁰ 'Christian Missions and Government Education in India'. Review of a Letter addressed to the Court of Directors of the East-India Company by the Earl of Ellenborough (while President of the Board of Control) and a Memorandum of Sir George Clerk, Secretary to that Board. London, CMS, 1858.

³¹ Charles Raikes, Notes on the North-Western Provinces (London, 1852) pp. 14-15.

new turn of events.

We saw a little and heard more of the progress of English education in Government and Missionary schools and the stimulus imparted to both English and vernacular education by the grant-in-aid system. This system has been introduced recently during my absence and is not only admirable in theory, but appears to be producing the happiest results.

Caldwell felt that government ought not to have schools of its own:

It is to be regretted that the Government (occupying the peculiar position it does as a Christian government in a heathen and Mohammedan country, in which Christian missionaries are endeavouring to make progress) should have established schools of its own in some places and thereby entangled itself in obligations which no government is able to discharge aright. It would have been better, it appears to me, if it had contented itself with stimulating educational efforts of Societies and individuals by grants-in-aid and by giving shape to these effort by means of its power of supervision and organisation.

In brief, the Government was not a suitable schoolmaster.

If...it is thought right or expedient that the Government should undertake the office of schoolmaster of the people, it ought not to ignore the duties that devolve upon the schoolmaster. To teach history without

teaching the most important facts in the history of the world, the facts connected with the death of Christ and the propagation of Christianity, to teach morals without teaching the Gospels, which contain the best and most persuasive moral instruction the world has ever received; to teach political economy without teaching that 'righteousness exalteth a nation' and that civilisation is coterminous with Christianity, is to deal unfairly by the truth itself, as well as to forget the chief object which education is intended to accomplish, the fitting of the pupil for the right discharge of the duties of life.

Caldwell's immediate remedy was 'that in every school in which the Master (i.e. the Headmaster; Caldwell was thinking of the typical village school in which there was only one Master and perhaps a number of assistants) is a Christian, the Scriptures be read and explained for the first hour of the day.' Caldwell was not just talking about missionary schools at this point, though he allowed that attendance at these Scripture lessons should be voluntary. Further, Christian schoolmasters (again in Government schools) should be informed that 'they are at liberty out of school hours, to do whatever they think fit for the religious benefit of their pupils and others.'

Caldwell made one further point. He did not expect to see these changes immediately. It would be necessary to wait until

the views and feelings that animate the great mass of thoughtful Englishmen at home make themselves felt in India. In India itself there

is no 'public' and no public opinion, but the influence of English opinion with respect to the duties of the rulers of India is now beginning to make itself felt out here, and in several instances already I have heard of the views of 'The Times' being re-echoed in remote locations in India by officials who were wont to oppose the propagation of Christianity and to uphold caste.³²

Caldwell's comments about the role of Government reproduced fairly standard missionary thinking about 'secular education'. His ideas about Christian civilisation seem more extreme; however, it may simply be that he was more articulate than most missionaries on this subject. Clearly, for Caldwell, there was no such thing as an effective Indian public opinion, indeed the Indian population did not really enter his calculations. The hope was that English public opinion would influence 'the (English) rulers of India' to act in a more Christian way. Behind this lay Caldwell's assumption that 'civilisation is coterminous with Christianity'. This was a logical (if mistaken) position and Caldwell did not speculate as to why Britons, representing British government, did not want to promote Christian values.

Tensions of a new relationship

While the new Government initiatives in education which stemmed from the Wood Despatch obviously brought many advantages to the missionary

³² Dr. R.Caldwell to Rev E.Hawkins, March 6, 1858, Edeyenkoody. (USPG D4(B).507).

education enterprise, it also put the missionaries under pressure. The Despatch envisaged that there would be an expansion of Government education where there was inadequate provision through the voluntary system. The missionaries could not always make up their minds about the value of government education. Some were positive about it. A resolution of a united missionary conference at Ootacamund in 1858 spoke well of the government system on the grounds that secular education was good in itself and that 'it is better that the Native mind should be disabused of the absurdities of the prevailing systems and prepared by the true knowledge of history and science and by a healthy discipline, to receive, intellectually at least, the Divine system of Christianity.'³³ The majority of the missionaries, however, felt that Government schools, because they only offered 'secular' education, (frequently referred to as 'godless' education) were no real substitutes for missionary schools. So there was often a tendency on the part of the missionaries to do what they could to ward off the advent of Government education, particularly in the areas where missionary education had previously predominated. The work of the CMS and SPG in the Tirunelveli District was one of the great success stories of missionary education. Even here, where missionary education was so dominant, Government intervention in education was seen as a threat. Rev A.R.Symonds, the SPG secretary in Madras, wrote that the Committee had received 'an important communication' from the Director of Public Instruction. In effect the Director wanted to know whether the SPG and

³³ Resolution on the Government System of Education from Resolutions of the South India Missionary Conference, Ootacamund, 1858, cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 173.

the CMS who had to date been one hundred per cent responsible for education in Tirunelveli District, had the resources to expand. The Government did not wish to set up its own schools but would do so 'should the Societies be prevented by want of funds or men from meeting its requirements'. Symonds then expressed the usual horror of 'secular education'.³⁴ Significantly, within eight months new funds for the educational work at Tirunelveli had already been found by the SPG with some help from the SPCK.³⁵

At a different level the tensions between missionaries and Government fuelled the debate about whether missionaries, properly so called, should be schoolmasters. The resignation of the distinguished Tamil scholar, Dr Pope, from his Mission, the SPG, had much to do with this debate. Pope had been accused by, among others, Dr Caldwell, of 'secularising' the school at Tanjore for which he was responsible, and of becoming a schoolmaster instead of a missionary. Pope's defence was that he was forced to do this because of the new educational situation that had arisen as a result of Government initiatives. Pope's defence ran as follows:

It has so happened that the development and extension of the Government Educational system has tendered it of late necessary (as it seemed) for me to pay special attention to schools...I felt that the youth of the place were slipping through my fingers. The Grant-in-aid scheme

³⁴ Rev A.R.Symonds to Hawkins, 26 March 1858, Madras (USPG D4(B).514).

³⁵ Symonds to Hawkins, 27 November 1858, Madras. A number of new schools were to be founded. (USPG D4(B).583).

(which *pace* the M.D.C. [the Madras Diocesan Committee of the SPG] I must still be permitted to call a 'noble' one) offered me the assistance which the M.D.C. so steadily refused. The grant so long made to our missions of 350 Rs per mensem for education, was in peril. And as the M.D.C. will give me no other master, I became one myself. It was, and is, evident that Missionary Societies must either make a great effort to maintain their position in the Education of the country, or allow the youth of this country to fall into the hands of those whose system excludes all religious training.³⁶

Pope's situation was that he felt he needed to be more involved in the schoolwork than the Mission would allow. Many missionaries, on the other hand, felt that they were trapped in their schools and colleges, engaged in educational activities that were far removed from their missionary calling. In this they, and their Missions, were under a certain amount of Government pressure, now that Government money was involved. We have an example in Nagapatam, also in Tamil country, much about the same time as Pope's difficulties, that is, in the early days of the grants-in-aid system. The Government (through the Inspector of Schools) indicated that before they would give a grant to the Nagapatam English School, it would be necessary for the local SPG missionary, Mr Regel, to become, in effect, the Headmaster of the school. However, the SPG Committee in Madras were unhappy about this. 'The Committee feel the impossibility of their recognising so serious a departure

³⁶ G.U.Pope's resignation letter submitted to the Bishop of Madras, 10 April, 1858, Ootacamund. (USPG D4(B).521).

from the purpose for which that gentleman was connected with the Incorporated society...far too small a portion of Mr Regel's time is devoted to purely missionary or evangelistic work.' ³⁷

There was a similar debate and dispute between the SPG and the Government over the running of two SPG teacher training institutions. Mr Richards, the Inspector of Schools, had visited the institutions in question, Vediapooram and Sawyerpooram Seminaries (contemporary spelling) and had recommended grants-in-aid for both of them. With regard to Sawyerpooram he was concerned that the Principal's assistants had usually, in due course, become candidates for holy orders. He reckoned that 'the prospect of a higher calling, and the necessity of qualifying themselves for it, have diminished their interest in and impaired their efficiency for their scholastic duties'. He therefore recommended that 'there should be a distinct pledge, that no encouragement would be given to a Master, to whose salary the Government may be disposed to contribute, to aspire to the Ministerial office.' ³⁸ These remarks had been passed on by the Director of Public Instruction, A.I.Arbutnot, to Rev C.S. Kohlkoff, the acting SPG secretary in Madras. Kohlkoff wrote back to Arbuthnot (19 August, 1856) declining to give any pledges; he considered the request an interference with religious liberty. Arbuthnot replied (28 August, 1856) denying that this was so. He was simply talking about people not

³⁷ Resolution of the Madras District Committee of the SPG, meeting on 18 November 1856. (USPG D5(A).35).

³⁸ Report by I. Richards, Inspector of Schools, to A.I.Arbutnot, the Director of Public Instruction, 3 April 1856, forwarded by Arbuthnot to Rev C.S.Kohlkoff, the Acting Secretary of the Madras Diocesan Committee of the SPG. (USPG D5(A).22).

changing their profession. The issue ran and ran. Richards was concerned (he expressed this in a letter to Arbuthnot, an extract from which was part of the report of the DPI to Government on grants-in-aid, 19 July 1857) that a system had grown up whereby native schoolteachers were always hoping that they might become catechists, and missionary schoolteachers that they might be ordained. He saw this as detrimental to education. The matter was solved by Arbuthnot dropping the idea of pledges and substituting a system whereby the Training Master (or rather the SPG) refunded the Government grants in the event of his resigning before completing a fixed period of duty.

All this served to illustrate the necessary fine-tuning between Government and missionaries if the system was to work. With the Government afraid that their schoolteachers would become missionaries and the missions afraid that their agents would become schoolmasters, there was certainly need for compromise. Arbuthnot and Richards were basically sympathetic to the cause of missionary education. Other men in other places were much less so, and then the relationship could become increasingly tense.

The Indian Mutiny

The Indian Mutiny in 1857 caused all the British who had anything to do with India to re-think their relationship with that nation. In the thinking of the Raj, the Mutiny dealt a blow to the belief that all men, and therefore necessarily Indians, were rational and educable. In the same way after the Mutiny the conversion of Indians to Christianity ceased to evoke much enthusiasm. For

evangelicals the Mutiny was a blow sent by God to humble Britain for its remissness in Christianising India, and particularly for the government's toleration of idolatry.³⁹ The Evangelical party in Britain, together with a group of Punjab officials who saw God's providence in the escape of that province from the uprising, urged renewed efforts at conversion by measures such as Bible classes in the government schools. But outside strictly missionary circles optimism about the spread of Christianity in India was fast waning in mid-Victorian Britain. Lord Derby, in December 1857, spoke of 'what I own seems to be the somewhat hopeless task of Christianising India'. In India, talk of conversion evoked a uniformly hostile response among the senior officials of the government. Other values survived. Religious toleration received a boost from the Queen's declaration. Education as a government policy remained a popular option partly because the educated classes had remained loyal during the Mutiny.⁴⁰

As a working generalisation it is true to say that missionary speakers blamed the Mutiny on the lack of Christian influence, while 'secular' thinkers felt that the attempt to introduce Christianity to India had been one of the causes of the trouble. J.W.Kaye's analysis in the immediate aftermath of the Mutiny - his book Christianity in India: an Historical Narrative was published in 1859 -

³⁹ For an account of the Christian public's reaction to the Mutiny and particularly the churches' sponsoring of a 'Day of Humiliation' see Brian Stanley, 'Christian Responses to the Indian Mutiny of 1857' in W.J.Sheils ed. Studies in Church History (20): The Church and War (Oxford, 1983) pp.277-90.

⁴⁰ T.R.Metcalf, Ideologies of the Raj (Cambridge, 1995)pp. 47-9, J.Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy Second edition (Oxford 1994) pp. 89-90.

neatly summarised the arguments. He said:

On the one side it has been declared that the mutiny has resulted from the religious apprehensions of the people, excited by the continued innovations of the English, threatening their ancestral faiths and their time-honoured usages: and on the other side, it has been asserted with equal confidence that God has visited us with this affliction as a signal mark of his displeasure on account of our national remissness in the great work of upholding His Kingdom and diffusing His word.⁴¹

Following upon the Mutiny, the provisions of the Wood Despatch, while not abandoned, were interpreted in a way that dashed the missionaries' hopes of an era in which the government would withdraw from direct education and support the missionaries instead. On the contrary the Government became by far and away the leading player in education (as it did in Britain despite its continued support for voluntary educational associations).

In fact rather than a new era of cooperation, battle lines were now drawn. After the Wood Despatch neither side, missionaries nor Government, could ignore each other. They were to some extent within the same system. The grants-in-aid scheme, quite apart from anything else, tied them together. Where there were different aims, these became evident. For example, while the money provided by the grants-in-aid scheme was welcome enough, fears arose among

⁴¹ Cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) pp. 178-9.

the missionaries that Government curricula and Government inspection would make it difficult or impossible for missions to maintain a reasonable level of Christian instruction in their own institutions. There were even examples of missionaries believing that to be true to their cause would be to invite government retribution. The minutes of a meeting of the North West Provinces Conference of the CMS⁴² record that the Conference felt the need to encourage Christian teachers in schools to take more seriously 'the distinctly Missionary character of their duties.' Also there needed to be more Christian teachers 'although we realise that this may result in loss of Government grants, diminished numbers, and lowered efficiency in secular learning.'

Again, the missionaries had always accused State institutions of being weak on religious and moral education, of being 'secular' schools and colleges, and these criticisms were now intensified. There were seen to be two different sorts of schools. Religious schools (missionary) and secular schools (government) and despite the huge need for education in India, on some occasions government and missionary schools were clearly rivals competing within the same locality. If this meant that the government then withdrew its financial support from the missionary school, there very often came a moment in the ensuing controversy when both sides appealed to first principles in order to explain their position. As suggested, this was an instructive debate in terms of long term aims and goals. We must now examine this debate in detail.

⁴² Minutes of a Meeting of North West Provinces Conference of the CMS. (November 1879), at Agra. (CMS C I 1/0 4/6/3).

Renewed missionary zeal after the Mutiny

As already noted, the Indian Mutiny certainly did not help matters. After the first shock was over, and all sides had decided what they thought the implications of the Mutiny were, it became apparent that missionaries and Government were going to find it more difficult to work together. This was partly because the Mutiny promoted a *renewal* of missionary zeal (at least in Britain) which in turn produced a reaction amongst those suspicious of missionaries. One of the heroes of the Indian Mutiny (in England), Lieutenant Colonel Edwardes, a Christian imperialist, addressing a large audience at Cambridge on the subject of 'Christianity in India' made the well-received point that India had been placed under British rule so that Christianity should be disseminated. His actual words were:

Why, after all was it that Providence had put 180,000,000 of people under our control?...Were we to regard India as a freehold, to which we had a prescriptive right, because we were white, and wise, and bold and strong, and enterprising, and too thick upon the ground in our own country? Were these our charters? Or did they think that India was a charge and stewardship which God had given us, because He had been pleased to set his love upon us?

Edwardes' argument against secular education was that an educational policy presupposed a responsibility on the part of the Government to improve the lot of the people. Yet, 'once exclude religious responsibility to God from a nation's

tenure of a foreign country, and there remains nothing but the tenure of conquest; and the very idea of conquest excludes the idea of responsibility to man.' ⁴³

Others built on this idea. Britain had *failed* in its responsibility. Perhaps, indeed, the Mutiny was a judgement on a Government which had betrayed the Christian cause. All the more reason now to reaffirm the Government's Christian commitment. The most popular way of pressing home this point was to call, as did the distinguished Secretary of the CMS, Henry Venn, for what he called 'the open and unfettered Bible in the Government Schools in India'. 'Let the Government', said Venn, 'repeal its prohibition of the Bible in its own schools; so that teachers and scholars, who may be willing to study God's word, in school hours, may do it without breaking the law.' Venn's arguments were based, like Edwardes, on the idea of a Christian civilisation and therefore a Christian government and a responsibility on the part of that government to share Christian presuppositions with those who, whether they would or not, were being ruled by Christian principles. Thus, in the law courts

India had Courts before we arrived, in which justice was professedly administered. England has superseded those native Courts of Judicature; and in so doing, has introduced a new standard of right and wrong, founded essentially upon principles derived from God's word. Our Legislation has made many things criminal which their

⁴³ Speech of Lt.Col.Sir H. Edwardes, K.C.B. delivered at an extraordinary meeting at the Town Hall, Cambridge on 18 June 1860. (CMS pamphlet collection).

Codes of Law never forbid, and which their religion sanctioned.

Government itself had seen fit to make illegal such practices as suttee (sic), thuggee (sic), and female infanticide at a time when they were widely accepted in Indian society. It was just and necessary, therefore, to allow those who were governed by codes of behaviour to understand and learn those codes, and for that the study of the Bible was necessary. The idea that 'a voluntary Bible Class in Government Schools would be an act of proselytism' depended on a wrong understanding. If proselytising meant bringing to bear an improper influence, then in what sense was reading and studying the Bible 'an improper influence'? Was this not more likely to be the effect of extra-Biblical literature?

Finally, Venn accepted the need for more Government involvement in Indian education. He agreed that missionary societies certainly did not have the means to meet the need and besides they 'have also another object in view: - the conversion of adults, and not the education of the heathen masses'.⁴⁴

Venn was speaking for a widespread feeling amongst Christians, especially Evangelicals in Britain. At a meeting held in Edinburgh (in 1859) to petition the Government to remove the prohibition on the use of the Bible in Government schools in India a letter was read out from the Marquis of Tweeddale, the former Governor of Madras. One of Tweeddale's trump cards -

⁴⁴ 'A Plea for the Open and Unfettered Bible in the Government Schools in India' by Henry Venn, Honorary Secretary of the C.M.S., London 1859 (CMS pamphlet collection).

it should be remembered that much of the excitement about India had to do with the Mutiny - was that Madras, the most Christianised part of India, had remained quiet during the Mutiny. He pointed out that he had been advocating the use of the Bible in the classroom in Government schools (in Madras) as early as 1846. His main argument, like Venn's, was based on the idea of a Christian civilisation. 'Even among the more respectable classes employed in the service of Government, we have constant proofs that in this country [i.e. India] it requires a more solid foundation than is to be found in the Hindu or Mohammedan faith to bear the change which learning operates on the mind of those who emerge out of a state of ignorance.' ⁴⁵

An anonymous author, writing about the same time, boldly argued that the Government policy of neutrality was not the policy the Government had followed from the first, but a recent and erroneous interpolation. He referred to the Act of Parliament of 1813, never repealed, and itself a re-formulation of a policy first adopted in the East India Company charter of 1793, which stated that 'such measures ought to be adopted as may tend to the introduction among them [the Indian people] of useful knowledge and of religious and moral improvement.' The idea of neutrality was never even suggested. The author then suggested that 'as a measure tending to "the religious and moral improvement" of the natives', the Government should agree to 'the admission of the Bible into the Government system of education, under proper precautions. This measure would place the Government of India in its right

⁴⁵ Occasional Papers on India No VII. Minute of the Marquis of Tweeddale, late Governor of Madras on the Introduction of the Bible as a Class-Book into Government Schools in India, London, 1859 (CMS pamphlet collection).

position, and quietly, safely, and effectually, inaugurate the true policy.' ⁴⁶

A pamphlet issued by the CMS in 1860 also took the line that the Government itself had introduced a Western education because it knew that its Christian roots made it superior to all others. To the idea that the Koran and the Hindu scriptures would also need to be taught if the Bible were introduced, the response was that they were not worthy.

I would ask first, What object the Government of India has proposed to itself, by offering an education to the Hindu and Mohammedan in English, or in European literature and science, instead of their own oriental learning? Is it not to raise them, both socially and morally and further create some bond of union between them and ourselves, and ultimately to fit them to take some large and influential part in the just and enlightened Government of their own country? But these ends would be wholly frustrated, if the Koran is to be taught in the Government schools...And what possible enlightenment of the Hindu youth could flow from instructing him in the puerile absurdities of the Vedas, or in their Shastras, or in the impure fables of his sacred legends.

Amusingly, the case that a Christian education could not fairly be provided out of the taxes of Hindus and Muslims was answered by the bold assertion that

⁴⁶ CMS Occasional Papers on India No. IX The Policy as Established by Law of the Indian Government Opposed to the Neutral Policy in Respect of Christianity, London, 1860 (CMS pamphlet collection).

most of Britain's revenues for the ruling of India came from the opium trade anyway!⁴⁷

There was even a memorial to Queen Victoria on the subject - the use of the Bible in government schools and colleges - submitted by the CMS. The memorial admitted that missionary education could not do the entire educational job in India i.e. government was needed, but it objected to the government's 'secular education'. It suggested that Western education inevitably undermined the local religions, therefore the choice was between 'proselytism to infidelity in Government schools, and proselytism to Christianity in Bible schools'. It also protested that grants-in-aid had in recent times been withdrawn from missionary schools, through a false pursuit of the idea of neutrality, and cited a notorious example from the educational work of the CMS among the Santhals in Bengal, where a grant-in-aid scheme had been countermanded by the Home government (after having been sanctioned in India) on the grounds that it appeared to associate the government with measures to convert a particular group of the population. (The government response coincided with the Mutiny and was no doubt a panic reaction.) ⁴⁸

⁴⁷ 'Bible Education in India, Some Objections Considered', by John Fryer Thomas, Late member of Council, Madras, London, 1860. (CMS pamphlet collection).

⁴⁸ Occasional Papers on India I. 'A Memorial to Queen Victoria from the CMS on the Religious Policy of the Government of India with an Explanatory Statement on Past and Present Policy of the India Government. in respect to Religion and Education of the Natives', London 1858 (CMS pamphlet collection).

Amidst these measured criticisms an occasional more radical voice was heard. The Rev Percy Badger, for example, took a more jaundiced view of recent developments. Badger was a Chaplain in the Diocese of Bombay and a pamphlet by him, published in 1858, took an unusual line – at least unusual for Christians in India.. Basically he believed that education as such was a bad thing. It had failed to raise the moral character of the people. 'I have met with a great number of Hindoos and Mohammedans, who were brought up in our schools and colleges, and with hardly an exception, I could discover in them, in respect of moral character, no single trait to distinguish them from their less educated countrymen.' Education had failed to secure a greater attachment to British rule, as witness the Mutiny. The process itself had simply increased the natives' suspicion of the Government's motives, as education was seen as a covert attempt by the Government (however much they protested otherwise) to undermine the religions of the Indian people. At the same time the Indian people did not understand an education which did not go hand in hand with religion. They had no model within their own system which demonstrated that this was possible or desirable. In the light of these considerations, Badger thought it best not to extend Government education any further in India. If new voluntary schools were forthcoming, of whatever complexion, they could be grant aided. Beyond this the State should desist. Badger felt, however, that in due course this 'neglect' would produce a change of attitude. The best policy was 'to leave them to feel their want of it before we undertake to help in providing it'. He admitted that this raised that question as to why education might be thought to be a good thing in Britain but not in India? 'In England education is based upon a system of purest morality and the most exalted

religion; since independently of all State intervention, there exists, so to speak, a substratum of both in the national mind (to say nothing of the institutions established to promote them) pervading it so entirely, that on that and that only can the fabric of education be upraised.' Thus, 'The missionary ...must precede the schoolmaster, if the instructions of the latter are to be crowned with beneficial success.'

Badger then proceeded to the consideration of what might be done about the present system. He was against introducing a 'mixed education' i.e. the introduction of any religious elements into Government education. It would not work. 'If because of the comparatively insignificant differences among the various religious committees in England, no system of State education has hitherto obtained general concurrence there; how hopeless would be the attempt to secure the acquiescence of the many and opposing creeds in India in a scheme that should comprise any religion at all?' It would also be unjust. 'Let us place ourselves as Christians under a Mohammedan government, paying due obedience and tribute, and entitled consequently to all the privileges of subjects; and let us further suppose that we are debarred from availing of the education provided by the State unless we consent that our children read the Koran.' He also thought, in the light of the Mutiny that it was impolitic. In any case Badger objected to the use of the Bible in Government institutions on Christian grounds. 'I see not, from those Scriptures [i.e. the Bible] that to Government, as a Government, is confided any such trust, - that it is charged with any such duty, or empowered with any such attributes, as are involved in communicating to the unevangelised the facts, and doctrines,

and mysteries, of our holy religion.'

Badger's argument was similar to the Tractarian doctrine of 'Reserve'. The use of the Bible, in educational institutions and elsewhere, was positively harmful if not carried out by skilled practitioners and if offered to those who were not ready for it - a sort of 'pearls before swine' argument, which he skilfully drew out, by reference to Paul's preaching in the Areopagite address.⁴⁹

Government reactions: fear of 'proselytisation'

Badger's views were eccentric. The usual missionary argument was that the Mutiny and many another of the ills of India stemmed from the unwillingness of the Government to realise that it was representative of a Christian civilisation and to act accordingly. One simple way to reverse this situation was to Christianise the education system, in particular by allowing the Bible to be taught in Government schools.

The Government, not surprisingly, would not accept this. In their view the Mutiny had partially been the result of Christian 'proselytisation'. The Government policy of 'strict neutrality' needed to be reinforced, if there were not to be further difficulties. Colonel MacDonald, the Education Secretary in Madras in 1879, in the course of a long review of the Government's education

⁴⁹ 'Government in its relation with Education and Christianity in India', by Rev George Percy Badger, Chaplain in the Diocese of Bombay, London, 1858 (CMS pamphlet collection).

policy,⁵⁰ referred to a government statement in April 1859 just after the Mutiny.⁵¹ This statement expressed disquiet that 'the recent measures of Government for the promotion of education have been alleged to be among the causes which have brought about the recent outbreak in the army of Bengal.' (i.e. the Mutiny). MacDonald then went on to describe a major protest against the whole grants-in-aid system in 1859 in Madras. According to his account, on 16 April the newspaper the 'Indian Statesman' reported a 'monster meeting' in Madras 'for the purpose of proposing and adopting a Memorial to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for India, on the subject of interference by the Government with the religions of the country.' The memorial included the following: 'Your memorialists earnestly request that the system of grants-in-aid may be abolished, and the sums at present disbursed through that channel be devoted to the establishment of Government provincial schools, by means of which a far better education can be afforded to the people than has been, or can be, in the institutions of the Missionary Societies in which the larger portion of the grants is swallowed up to the intense dissatisfaction of the people.' The Mutiny was then mentioned; also a request that 'Government Officers may be restrained from taking official part in Missionary proceedings on public anniversaries and meetings, and that the neutrality promised may be undeviatingly observed.'⁵²

MacDonald, as we shall see later, was unsympathetic to the missionary cause,

⁵⁰ Order, 15 September 1879, No 351 of the Madras Government.

⁵¹ Government Educational Despatch No 4, 7 April 1859.

⁵² *ibid.*

but there was clearly a good deal of feeling being expressed in the post-Mutiny period about missionary education and the Government association with it. More serious than the above was a letter addressed by Lord Ellenborough, when he was President of the Board of Control, to the Directors of the East India Company. Ellenborough agreed with the Secretary to the Board, Sir George Clerk, 'in condemning the indirect system of Grants-in-aid to Missionary schools, as violating the Government pledge to maintain perfect neutrality in all matters affecting religion in India,' and believed 'that the Educational measures can alone account for the almost unanimous mutiny of the Bengal army, and the extensive hostile feelings among the people, since all other causes of suspicion or complaint were partial or local, while our scheme of education pervaded the whole land. No measure could be adopted more calculated to tranquillise the native mind, and to restore to us their confidence, than withholding Government aid from schools with which Missionaries are connected!' ⁵³

Ellenborough's forthright intervention caused some consternation, but it was not the generally held view of the government. Frederick Halliday, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal responded by defending the whole idea of making grants-in-aid to missionary schools. He suggested that it was quite impossible to pursue the government's educational aims as a whole without

⁵³ CMS Occasional Papers on India III 'Christian Missions and Government Education in India. Review of a Letter addressed to the Court of Directors of the East-India Company by the Earl of Ellenborough (while President of the Board of Control) and a Memorandum of Sir George Clerk, Secretary to that Board.' London, CMS, 1858. (CMS pamphlet collection) See also Occasional paper VI.

some sort of system which empowered the voluntary sector. If voluntary organisations were to be favoured in this way why exclude the missionary societies? He admitted that they had as an important aim 'proselytisation', but then so did many another similar religious organisation. He also felt that proselytism was not 'the primary object of the Missionary Schools'. While that indeed might be the primary object of the missionary himself, the school's primary object was 'proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic'.⁵⁴

If Halliday's arguments are compared with those of Venn ⁵⁵ an instructive contrast emerges. Venn argued that Christian civilisation meant Christian education, so it was just a matter of getting on with it. Attempting to pretend that it was not Christian based education was pointless. Halliday believed that it was possible to separate out education from the educators and pursue many educational tasks without the presuppositions of the teacher needing to be taken much into account.

A modified scheme

The Government grants-in-aid scheme was in fact not dropped. What did happen was that the scheme was modified. Rather than gradually withdrawing from the whole field of education in favour of voluntary associations, the

⁵⁴ Occasional Papers in India No. VI Grants-in-Aid to Mission- Schools, Minute by Frederick J. Halliday, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal on the Earl of Ellenborough's Letter of April 28, 1858 with Sir George Clark's Memorandum. London, 1859. (CMS pamphlet collection).

⁵⁵ See above pp. 211-2.

Government increased its commitment to schools and colleges wholly funded and managed by the Government. The missionaries claimed, with justice, that this was not what the Education Despatch of 1854 had intended, rather the reverse, and they also continued to feel aggrieved that there was no move on the part of the Government to retreat from their policy of 'strict neutrality' in matters of religion.

What kept the missionaries from becoming too obstreperous was that they were increasingly dependent on Government funds to maintain the work. School administrators, always short of funds, alternated between hoping that Government would give a grant and that more money would be forthcoming from the home country. The former often imposed difficult conditions, but the latter was all too often a strictly limited resource. John Wenger, the Baptist leader in Calcutta, wrote to the BMS in London in July 1866.

The Calcutta and Serampore brethren met here on Tuesday last and among other topics the subjects of the Intally school for boys and the Benevolent Institution were discussed. With regard to the former the following instructions were adopted. That we recommend the acceptance of such government grant-in-aid as would secure the means of supporting a second teacher like Mr Williamson. It was thought that if we could secure the continuance of Mr John Williamson's labours, the adoption of the former resolution would enable him to prepare a small class annually for the 'entrance' examination. The school would then acquire a character, and would probably be much better supported

than it is at present. Still it is possible that an addition to the Society's grant for a few years would be found almost necessary.

The Baptists, it will be noticed, were keen to accept government help, if it were available. They were here following a trend in Britain, where the 1860s had seen a change of attitude among Dissenters. While previously fiercely opposed to government 'interference', to the point of refusing educational grants from the government, they had come round to the inevitability, even the desirability, of government-sponsored education. Perhaps they realised that both in Britain and in India voluntary effort unaided would simply not be adequate for the task in hand.⁵⁶ This did not mean, of course, that they were always satisfied with the government's policies. Again, both in Britain and in India, there were to be ongoing disputes about the sort of education that government provided and supported.

Wenger continued, complaining that the government was about to cut off support to the Benevolent Institution because standards had fallen. There were pressures to co-operate in the running of the school with the Scots, but some were opposed and wondered whether funds from the BMS would be available instead.⁵⁷ A decade or so later, there is a similar story. The Benevolent Institution still survived but it now badly needed money for repairs to the building. It was hoped that the government would give a substantial grant but

⁵⁶ G. Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England (London, 1962) pp. 176, 194.

⁵⁷ Angus Library, Letter Rev John Wenger to the Secretaries of the BMS, 7 July, 1866 from Calcutta.

even so there would have to be a public appeal for funds.⁵⁸

The above extracts are instructive because what it described was typical. The Benevolent Institution was in danger of losing its Government grant because it was 'inefficient', but it was inefficient because it did not have enough money to pay decent salaries. Co-operation with other missionary agencies was a possibility, but better would be help from headquarters, particularly in the form of more trained staff. Ten years later the Benevolent Institution was still surviving, but still in need of money. This time money needed to be spent on maintaining the buildings. The Government could be expected to help, but only partially.

Missionary protests

Shortage of money tied the missionaries to the Government. They were therefore the more aggrieved when the Government supported *their* own schools rather than missionary ones, in contravention, as the missionaries saw it, of the Wood Despatch. The dispute over this was long standing and even acrimonious. In 1872 a memorial was sent by the 'missionaries engaged in education in India in connection with the missionary societies in England and America' to the 'Viceroy and Governor General in Council'. Basically this was an attack on the supposed non-implementation of some aspects of the Grant-in-Aid system. The claim was that the Government was not, as envisaged, systematically withdrawing from (higher) education but rather

⁵⁸ Angus Library, G.H.Rouse to A.H. Baynes, August 13, 1877, Calcutta.

increasing its direct role. Aided education, far from being encouraged, was being squeezed by government competition. 'No Aided Institution can really flourish side by side with one, which besides the prestige which always attaches in such a country as India to a Government Institution, has been furnished at the cost of the State with the most complete educational apparatus that money can provide, so as to place it altogether beyond the reach of fair and healthy competition.'

The memorial claimed that the Government was spending more money than it need to. Aided Institutions would do the same job equally well. But worse - 'the funds of the State are employed to repress instead of developing local resources. So long as Government continues to take upon itself the cost of people's education, it is not to be expected that any real or vigorous effort will be made by them to supply it for themselves.' We can discern here a new facet of the missionary case, appealing to the characteristic liberal assumptions of self-help, and perhaps reflecting the widely held view among religious groups in Britain, that the government should be kept out of education for fear of 'interference'. The issue, apparently, was not whether Government education gave way to missionary education, but rather to native or local initiatives. The government must not fall into the mistake already made by the missionaries in attempting to establish a healthy church.

For some years the policy of most Missionary Societies was precisely the same as that which appears now to guide the officers of the several Educational Departments. The people were thought too poor to do

anything for themselves and accordingly little effort was made to draw forth their contributions; Schools, Churches, Teachers etc. were all provided for them out of Mission funds, and though every congregation was expected to contribute something towards these objects, the amount for many years was so small as to be scarcely appreciable. So prejudicial, however, was the system found at length to be to the development of a really independent Church that it has now been almost everywhere abandoned, and a grant-in-aid system adopted in its place, the result of which has been most encouraging, and sufficiently proves that there is both the will and the ability in the native Christian community to maintain its own religious teachers and schools, and that all that was necessary was that this disposition be fostered and developed.

There was the usual complaint about 'secular' education, which was 'a source of great political danger'. The Government's position was not neutral but antagonistic (to all religions) in that it 'lends all the weight of its prestige and pecuniary support to a system in which the religious instruction of any kind is not, as in private institutions, left optional to the managers or pupils themselves, but is absolutely inadmissible.'⁵⁹

Government obduracy

⁵⁹ A Memorial to the Viceroy and Governor General in Council from Missionaries engaged in education in India in connection with Missionary Societies in England and America. (printed 1872). (CMS C I 2/0 10 D/2).

All this missionary activity produced very little. A.C.Lyell, Secretary to the Government of India, replied to the memorial but he did little more than say that the missionaries were mistaken; the Government was indeed continuing to implement the Education Despatch of 1854.⁶⁰ The memorialists then responded with a letter to Lord Northbrook, the Viceroy, which suggested that Lyell's letter was a put-down. They claimed that: 1. They were not speaking on behalf of missionary education only, but of popular education generally. 2. They were not accusing the Supreme Government of disloyalty to the Education Despatch of 1854, rather the local government, in the spirit of a statement made by the Supreme Government itself that 'the education policy of the Despatch of 1854 has not been strictly adhered to, and in some provinces is growing more and more inoperative every day.' 3. Lyell had missed the point: not whether the Missionary schools were getting a fair slice of the cake, but whether the indirect system of education by means of grants-in-aid was not on every ground preferable to the direct' (italics added) and that 'the former system has never had a fair trial, inasmuch as it is impossible for Aided and Government schools to compete on equal terms.' This unfair competition not only promoted 'a forced and unhealthy system' but created 'a needless obstacle in the way of the advancement of Christianity in this country'. 4. Local government educational officers tended to see aided education as supplementary to direct education not as superseding it, again contrary to the

⁶⁰ Printed reply by A.C.Lyell, Secretary to the Government of India, to Reverend J.Barton, Secretary of C.M.S., Madras, 23 June 1873, a response to the Memorial sent by 'Missionaries engaged in education in India in connection with the missionary societies in England and America.' (CMS).

provisions of the Wood Despatch.⁶¹

But the Government was not to be drawn and Northbrook's reply of 5 September, 1873 was as thoroughly non-committal as Lyell's.⁶²

The missionaries continued to try to make themselves heard. In March, 1879, the same points as were made in the Memorial to the Viceroy in 1872 were reiterated in a Memorial to the Governor of Madras sent by 'the representatives of various Missionary Societies and others engaged in education in this Presidency.'⁶³ Amongst the signatories was William Miller.⁶⁴ The nub of the matter was (again) that though the Government claimed that they were adhering to the principles of the Wood Despatch they were in practice not doing so, because they were putting more and more resources into direct Government education and squeezing aided institutions. There followed a letter, later printed, from the Executive Education Committee to the acting Chief Secretary to Government. It admitted the difficulty which might occur if, in a particular locality, there were those who were adamantly opposed to sending their children to a Missionary School and a Missionary School was the only, or the only good, school available. However, 'We repudiate the charge which the Director makes against the Missionaries of Southern India of

⁶¹ Letter Rev J. Barton to Lord Northbrooke, the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council, Madras, 22 August 1873. (CMS).

⁶² Lord Northbrooke to Rev J. Barton, 5 September, 1873. (CMS).

⁶³ March 1879 (CMS C I 2/0 10 D3).

⁶⁴ For Miller, see below p.239 n.72.

seeking to draw Government on to commit a breach of its avowed policy of religious neutrality. We are as anxious for real neutrality on the part of Government as any one can be. We should strongly deprecate any thing which would practically drive the children of unwilling parents, few as we believe they are, into Mission Schools.'

Further, as we have seen, the claim was that Missionaries were not pleading for more missionary education but more local education. 'It is by Institutions managed by Local Committees, which would consist in most cases of Hindu gentlemen, that we think Government Institutions should generally be replaced.'⁶⁵

Before proceeding with this debate it would be well to pause and consider some of the parallels between the arguments being used and similar disagreements beginning to be aired in Britain. The idea of schools run by religious agencies receiving state aid was, of course, already an accepted idea in Britain by this time, but how this was to be implemented was a question under contention. The missionaries and the government of India could scarcely have been ignorant of the recent debates over Forster's Education Act (1870). The newly established Board Schools were funded out of the rates, i.e. by government money, and the Church of England schools were already beginning to campaign for rate aid for church schools to enable them to compete. Their case was that their Anglican supporters were paying fees in voluntary schools in order to get the religious education they wanted for their children, while paying

⁶⁵ 2 December, 1879 (CMS C I 2/0 10 D/5).

rates to support the Board schools as well.⁶⁶ They did in fact secure this in the 1902 Education Act. There were parallels here with the protest of Hindus and Muslims that the government was supporting voluntary schools out of the taxes of non-Christians, but the missionaries were understandably slow to draw these. Both in Britain and in India it was not easy for voluntary organisations with their limited funds to compete with the resources available to government. Religious instruction in the Board Schools was voluntary (and undenominational) and this too provoked controversy. The schools were widely described as 'godless'. In the same way the missionaries in India were convinced that government schools, where religious instruction was not even an option, were positively antagonistic to religion, though pretending to a policy of neutrality. The argument used by the government, that it was better to have government schools and missionary schools in a given area so that there would be a choice for parents who did not wish to send their children to Christian schools, also had its British parallel. It was very similar to that raised by nonconformists in Britain who were forced to send their children to church schools in areas where there was no other school available. One wonders whether the non-conformist members of the committee were aware of this irony. If so, they certainly do not mention it in the official correspondence.

Colonel R. M. MacDonald, Director of Public Instruction for the Chief Secretary to the Government of Madras, replied to Madras memorial. In effect his response was that he did not believe the claim to neutrality. It was always the missionaries, not the local (Hindu) population, who complained about

⁶⁶ J.P. Parry, Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-75 (Cambridge, 1986) p. 107.

Government schools and colleges and requested that they be scaled down or discontinued so that 'whatever the Committee may say, the substitution of Mission for Government Institutions, without any reference to the wishes of the inhabitants, is one of the main objects which the Missionary Societies are aiming at.' MacDonald is contemptuous of schools 'conducted by native gentlemen'. Thus, 'if the few Government Colleges and Schools which exist in this Presidency were made over to the management of local committees of native gentlemen, the inevitable effect would be the lowering of the standard of education. Such a measure would probably be favourable to the Missionary enterprise, for it would reduce all schools to the level of the Mission Schools, and it would be easier for Mission Schools to compete with Hindu Schools than with Government Schools, but it would be disastrous to the cause of sound learning. The Annual Reports on Public Instruction show the unsound character of much of the teaching which goes on in Aided Schools generally.' ⁶⁷

The controversy did not end there. The Committee then produced a Memorandum (17 March 1880) which was in effect a reply to Colonel MacDonald. There was the usual wrangle about facts and figures. William Stevenson, the author of the Memorandum, took up the idea that the Missionaries were simply hoping to take over from Government educational institutions. He said that this was not true, but that even if it were, it would not alter the validity of the arguments i.e. that it must be 'the people of the country' that took over education from the government and that this was what

⁶⁷ 17 March, 1880 (CMS).

the Despatch of 1854 intended. Further, in the realm of practical politics, 'It is seldom that Government and Mission Schools come into direct competition, for the simple reason that, unless in exceptional cases, it is not possible for a Mission or any Aided Institution to bear up against an Institution that is backed by the overwhelming influence of a Government Department.'

On the issue of comparative efficiency Stevenson included some telling points.

1. Was it possible to make a fair comparison based on examination results alone? 2. Government schools were largely situated in 'favoured' areas; aided schools often the reverse. 3. The Government schools inevitably attracted 'the sons of the better classes'. 4. Was a school which accepted 'the exclusion of religion from all education' efficient? 5. Aided schools had prospered thus far - despite the active 'discouragement' of the Educational Department. What might they not have achieved if actively encouraged, as envisaged by the 1854 Despatch?

It seemed clear, said Stevenson, that the aim of fostering self reliance had been forgotten. In other words, the policy of the Despatch was not being implemented, indeed the Director claimed that to do so would be 'disastrous to the cause of sound learning'. Was this the considered view of government? If it was, they should say so, so that missionaries and others could get on with adjusting to the new situation. 'If it still holds good, it seems scarcely right that a Government official and a Government Department should be allowed to make it gradually void.'

The Memorial of March 1879 (from the 'Various Missionary Societies' not to be confused with the letters that followed i.e. from the Committee for Missionary Education) was responded to by an Order (15 September 1879, No. 351) of the Madras Government which reprinted the Memorial and also included the remarks on the Memorial by Colonel MacDonald, dated 1 May 1879.

The Education Order was quite severe on the Missionaries, though it did get the Missionaries' case more or less right. 'The contention of the Memorialists is that the free development of this avowed policy of grants-in-aid (it has just been rehearsed) as the chief means of promoting middle and lower education, has been violated by the action of the Government in certain cases in which Government Schools have been unnecessarily placed in competition with existing private schools, and by restricted expenditure on grants-in-aid and the limitation of the grant in particular instances.' In addition to saying that the missionaries ('the memorialists ') had got their facts wrong, the Order contended that overall 'the entire policy of the Despatch has been upheld'. This was not strictly correct. The government *had* modified the intention of the Wood Despatch which was clearly in favour of withdrawing from education in favour of the voluntary organisations when that became possible. It would have been more candid to admit a change of policy. This change was one aspect of post Indian Mutiny thinking, which stressed the importance of the government being seen to be religiously neutral (a main feature of Queen Victoria's post Mutiny speech). It is not surprising therefore that the Order went on to contend that the Government had had an eye to the 'still more

important principle (i.e. more important than grants-in-aid to private institutions) of strict religious neutrality in the application of State funds.' It feared that the memorialists' policy 'could not but have the effect of making the population for the present, and probably for a long time to come, mainly, if not solely, dependent on Missionary and Christian institutions for what may be called upper and middle education; and thus unavoidably envelop (sic) this branch of secular education in an atmosphere of possible, if not probable, proselytism.' Further, the contention was that, in practice the choice was likely to lie between Government Schools and Missionary Schools, and 'proselytism is their (the Missionary institutions') ultimate aim, and it would be unfair to the people of the country who provide the funds whence grants-in-aid are made, to shut them up to the alternative of superior education at institutions with this ultimate object.' Thus, 'the Government, where it had apparently restricted the absolutely free operation of the policy of grants-in-aid prescribed by the despatch, has already only done what was essential to maintain the principle of absolute religious neutrality in employing state funds for educational purposes.'

This was a serious rejoinder and attacked the missionary arguments at their weakest point. It did all too often appear as possible that the missionaries were concerned chiefly with promoting their own schools and that behind that promotion lay the covert intention of 'proselytising'. Talk of cheaper education and local initiative could then be seen as no more than a cover for their real intentions.

The Memorialists, however, were not prepared to let go. On 22 April 1880 they sent a further memorial to the Secretary of State for India, thus appealing over the head of the Madras Government. Their central contention was that

Government expenditure on purely Government schools has increased more largely than the expenditure on grants-in-aid. If any effect were being given to the main principle of the Despatch, the expenditure on direct Government operations would be - not increasing, or even remaining stationary - but diminishing, and that on grants-in-aid increasing. Now the tendency is in the opposite direction. After twenty six years not even a beginning has been made in carrying out the central and characteristic feature of the declared educational policy of Her Majesty's Indian Government.

Once more the Memorialists claimed that it was a prejudice that 'they have no aims except that of proselytising' and that they were deliberately trying to set up a situation whereby there was no school available but the missionary school. They also suggested that the Madras Government was taking up the position that 'it is hopeless to expect the natives to set up schools for themselves' whereas they felt able to 'assert with confidence...that native gentlemen are quite able, with Government aid, to establish and maintain and manage independent schools.' At present they did not so because the Government did it for them!

Disquiet continued on this issue, on both sides, and occasionally, too, among

local populations. In a decision not to establish a Government Zillah (higher) school in Trichinopoly because there were missionary school alternatives, a dissent to the decision was expressed in the following terms: 'I also dissent from the decision in this case, as the effect of it is to compel the inhabitants of this large town either to send their sons to a Mission School, which they dislike and which is not equal to the Government Zillah School, or to have no school at all.' ⁶⁸ Disquiet was also expressed over a similar situation in Tirunelveli.

On the whole, however, it was the missionaries who felt that they had been hard done by. An example from North India was the threat of withdrawal of Government funds from St John's College in Agra. This provoked yet another memorial to the Government. The reason for the withdrawal of funds was given as 'that the Government already bears the cost of a College in Agra, at which secular instruction up to the higher examination of the University is provided and that the demands for this kind of education has been shown by circumstances to be within the compass of a single College'. It was also alleged that the Government College was providing a much better education.

In response the CMS missionaries contended that: (1) A comparison of this sort was unfair: the Government College had unlimited resources; St John's had highly circumscribed support. (2) In any case there was not much difference in the level of education. (3) The Government College cost the Government a great deal more to run. (4) The Government College was not intended to be primarily English medium but 'designed for the higher

⁶⁸ Recorded in Government Order No. 85, 26 March 1866.

education of the poorer classes in the vernacular languages' - its purpose had changed. (5) The Wood Despatch had encouraged St John's to develop. It was now, thus extended, to be abandoned. (6) The Government's 'neutral' policy meant that those who opted for an institution which had a religious base, were deprived. (7) The very existence of the College was threatened - was this what the Government wanted? (8) The decision threatened the whole Grant-in-aid system.⁶⁹

The Government refused to budge, however, and when the CMS considered the matter at a conference in 1875 they had to consider what to do. It was decided to continue the College classes (the ones directly threatened by the withdrawal of Government aid) because: (a) 'High Christian Education' was a 'legitimate branch of Mission work' and St. John's classes were the only CMS work in that field (i.e. in the North West Provinces). (b) It was undesirable that Christian students should be forced to go to the Government College. (c) 'Missionaries have no other way of reaching the class of young men who now seek the Higher Education. Students of this class being so hard worked in the Government Colleges that they are naturally unwilling to attend to anything which does not bear directly on their studies.' (d) Teachers in Government Colleges were actively discouraging contacts between students and missionaries.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ A Memorial from the Calcutta Corresponding Committee of the CMS to the Viceroy and Governor General in Council re withdrawal of Grant-in-aid to St John's College, Agra (1873) (CMS).

⁷⁰ Extract from the Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the North West Provinces CMS Conference, 27 October 1875 (CMS).

It is instructive that at about this time, circa 1875, observers of the missionary scene writing from a missionary perspective, were beginning to suspect that the Government was turning decisively against missionary education. George Smith published his biography of Alexander Duff in 1879 and took the opportunity to comment on the educational scene in India in general.

So long as he [Duff] remained in India he secured fair play for the liberal and self-developing principle of the education despatch of 1854. When he and Dr Wilson ceased to influence affairs and rulers, the public instruction of India began to fall back into the bureaucratic, anti-moral and politically dangerous system from which Lord Halifax thought he had for ever rescued it. In all the Presidencies great state departments of secular educationists have been formed, which are permanent compared with the Governments they influence, and are powerful from their control of the press. Every year recently has seen the design of Parliament and the Crown, of both Whig and Conservative ministries, in 1854-60, farther and farther departed from, as it is expressed in this key-note of the great Despatch: 'We confidently expect that the introduction of the system of grants-in-aid will very largely increase the number of schools of a superior order; and we hope that, before long, sufficient provision may be found to exist in many parts of the country for the education of the middle and higher classes, independent of the Government

institutions, which may then be closed.⁷¹

As usual, Smith tended to exaggerate the roles of his heroes - Duff and Wilson - but he had a point. The newly powerful government departments of education were in a completely different relationship with the missionaries than had been true in Duff's day. What Smith should also have taken into account was the effect of the Indian Mutiny, as mentioned above.

Occasional goodwill

The picture painted here is of substantial and growing tension between the Government and the missionaries in the area of Higher Education. This may well have been the case but there were certainly exceptions. Take, for example, a representation by the missionaries that students in Christian educational institutions who were required to spend a proportion of their time studying the Christian faith were being actively disadvantaged in competing for places in the University. This had become a worrying issue for the missionaries. To them the most important hour of the day was the Scripture lesson - it usually started the day - but for some at least of the students this meant that key time was being spent on a subject which would not count in their final assessments. A confident William Miller ⁷² claimed that at Madras Christian College:

⁷¹ G.Smith Life of Alexander Duff 2 vols (London, 1879) vol 2, p. 364.

⁷² Miller, a Free Church of Scotland missionary, arrived in Madras in 1862 where he joined the school founded by John Anderson in 1837. At Miller's initiative the school was affiliated to the University of Madras (1867). In 1877 the Wesleyan Methodists and the CMS were drawn into a joint venture henceforward to be known as the Madras Christian College. This flourished under Miller's leadership. In 1883 the *Madras Christian College Magazine*

'No complaint has ever reached me of the four best hours of the students' week being devoted to subjects that count nothing in the University Examinations',⁷³ but others could not tell the same story.

The representation mentioned above was made in 1871, not long before the acrimonious debate also recorded above about the fate of St John's College in Agra, but in this case the missionaries found that they had a sympathetic response. The petition, sent by representatives of the missionary educational institutions affiliated to Calcutta University, read as follows:

...the scope and object of the schools and colleges with which we are severally connected is considerably wider than that of the Institutions maintained by the Government, inasmuch as we seek not merely the cultivation of the intellectual faculties of the young men who attend our classes, but the imparting to them of a religious and moral training also.

Previous to the establishment of the University we found no unwillingness on the part of our students to receive this instruction, whether Hindus, Mahommedans or Christians, but of late years we

first appeared and became an important influence in educated circles in Madras. The College produced many leaders in church and state. In 1901 Miller was vice-chancellor of the University of Madras and he left India in 1907. He had some influence on the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910.

⁷³ Report of the Second Decennial Conference held at Calcutta, 1882-3, cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 234.

have seen with regret a growing reluctance and aversion to such religious studies, not as being in themselves distasteful, but merely because they are not recognised by the University, and do not tell in any way in the final result. The pressure is in fact so great, and the competition so keen, that our students in their eager desire to stand well in University Examinations, not unnaturally grudge every hour taken from those secular subjects which alone tell in University Examinations, and so great is the pressure that is thus being brought to bear upon us in favour of a purely secular education that it has already become a matter of serious consideration with many of us, as also of our Directors and Committees in England, whether we ought not to retire altogether from the field, rather than continue our labours at so serious a disadvantage.

The document went on to point out that this was a general problem, as Calcutta University was responsible for setting the curricula and standards of education as a whole in India. It avowed no criticism of the Government policy of excluding religious instruction from Government schools and colleges. What the document requested was a system whereby taking courses in religious knowledge at University level be made an option. ('We ask neither teachers to teach nor scholars to learn subjects that are personally distasteful to either on religious grounds.') 'We simply ask in fact that religious knowledge may be placed upon the same footing as that accorded to Chemistry and Botany and other branches of Physical science in the present B.A. curriculum, as an

optional subject.' ⁷⁴

The University responded to this request by amending its Regulations for the B.A. (for 1873) by including as options subjects which could be linked with religious (Christian) instruction, 'The History of the Jews' and under Moral Philosophy selections from the Christian apologist Bishop Butler.⁷⁵

The Hunter Commission: no change

Despite these indications of goodwill the overall debate was never resolved. The missionaries had high hopes of the Hunter Commission of 1883, largely appointed because of their protests and including three missionary members, one of whom was William Miller. The Commission however, produced little that could be described as a direct response to missionary pressure, except perhaps a slight shift towards elementary education .⁷⁶ It reaffirmed the Wood Despatch, which might have been good news for the missionary cause except that it also affirmed the way that it had been interpreted over the previous nearly thirty years. In other words it made few concessions to the missionaries' protests. In 1911, looking back from the vantage point of the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, a review provoked by the

⁷⁴ Draft Proposal from Representatives of 14 of the Affiliated Educational Institutions re Religious Instruction in the University. (1871) (CMS C I 1/0 10/4/1).

⁷⁵ Notice issued by Registrar of Calcutta University dated April 29 1872 (CMS C I 1/0/10/4/2).

⁷⁶ Hugald Grafe, History of Christianity in India (IV/2): Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Bangalore, 1990) p. 197.

Edinburgh Conference of 1910, a missionary spokesman could see little change wrought by the Hunter Commission, rather he saw the same familiar policies being expanded. Rev W. Meston, writing in 'The Harvest Field' cited as evidence that in the Madras Presidency the Legislative Council had announced its intention to undertake the management of 19 new secondary schools 'as a beginning'. When asked by the Missionary Council of Aided Education whether the 1883 policies still stood, the Government gave no answer. This appeared to be the same pattern as before: an unannounced but effective change of policy. It would certainly result, remarked Meston, in 'curtailing the number of schools in which religious instruction can be imparted.'⁷⁷

Rev. G. Pittendrigh, also writing in 'The Harvest Field' a few month later, raised the same issues. Pittendrigh, like Meston, was responding to the Government's announced intention to found the same 19 model 'high schools' in the Madras Presidency. He pointed out that it was quite wrong to think of aided schools and government schools as somehow in competition. The Hunter Commission (1883) had stated quite specifically that the aided schools were to be the Education Department's chief concern. 'The main attention of the Department should be given to evoking and strengthening private effort; its success must be largely judged by the increase in the number and efficiency of aided or self-supporting institutions under private management that has resulted from its

⁷⁷ Rev W. Meston, 'Report on Commission III of the Edinburgh Conference - Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life.' The Harvest Field (xxx.4) April, 1911, p. 126.

Religious versus secular education

In some ways the whole debate was founded on a long standing argument about the relative merits of religious and secular education, one which had been current in the second half of the nineteenth century in Britain as well as in India. Thus it was of great concern to the missionaries not only, as they saw it, that the Government was usurping the function of aided education by increasing the number of Government schools, but also that there was increasing pressure on the missionary schools to secularise education. As early as 1867 the missionaries were worrying about a 'conscience clause' imposed by the Government on missionary schools. John Wenger wrote to BMS headquarters:

With regard to the Grant-in-aid system, the Director of Public Instruction is devising a scheme for defeating the object of mission work, by means of a 'conscience clause' making it obligatory to impart religious instruction only at a fixed hour, and with the understanding that those who do not like it, are not to be required to attend during the time that it is given. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal appears favourable to that antichristian proposal.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Rev. G. Pittendrigh, 'Missionary Education in South India Today.' The Harvest Field (xxxi.9) September 1911 p. 325.

⁷⁹ Angus Library, Rev John Wenger to Secretaries of BMS, 8 March 1867, Calcutta.

These are strong words and sound rather strange from the mouth of a Baptist. The Nonconformists in England were very concerned at this time (1867) that their own children would be forced into schools – particularly the National Schools run by the Church of England – because they lacked choice of schooling. In these schools the children of Dissenters were often not granted immunity from denominational teaching.⁸⁰ They were very much in favour of some sort of ‘conscience clause’ in these circumstances. Perhaps if Anglicans and Nonconformists alike could have understood the non-Christian protest against ‘proselytisation’ in the same terms as their own mutual fears about sending their children to schools of a different Christian tradition, they might have been more cautious in the stand that they took.

To some extent the fears of the missionaries were realistic. In 1880 the government laid down the specific subjects to be taught in grant aided schools. There was great concern among the missionaries that there would not be sufficient time for ‘religious instruction’.⁸¹ In 1882 the Indian Education Commission suggested that religious education be optional i.e. the parents could withdraw the children (though this was not enforced until 1919

⁸⁰ Kitson Clark, The Making of Victorian England p. 174.

⁸¹ ‘Missionary Education in India’ The Harvest Field (Nov 1893) pp. 179-84; also ‘Missionary Education and Government’ in The Harvest Field (May, 1892) pp. 410-8; also Andrew H.L. Fraser, ‘The Educational Situation in India and its Bearing on Missionary Policy’ International Review of Missions Vol. 1 (1912) and Vol. 2 (1913).

and then not everywhere).⁸² This 'conscience clause' was sometimes 'opting in' and sometimes 'opting out'. Teaching other religions than Christianity was also demanded by the Government. Here the missionaries tended to dig in their heels and no such regulation was passed.

The missionaries felt the need to defend themselves and an anonymous newspaper article laid out their case. The author admitted 'the general success of the grant-in-aid scheme', but expressed concern over a recent rule that stated 'that no teacher shall be eligible for a grant who does not devote fully four hours a day to secular instruction, exclusive of mere supervision'. The article admitted that 'the Director [of Education] is fully justified in taking precautions that the money of Government shall not serve as a mere help to Missionary Societies in obtaining a large staff of Evangelists and Catechists under the name of Masters' and that 'the Government very properly wish to secure a certain amount of so-called secular instruction in every aided school.'

There were, however, problems. In the words of the article, 'One of the difficulties of the practical working of the restriction will consist in determining exactly and conscientiously what is sacred and what is secular.' The example given seems a rather trivial one, that reading instruction given from the Bible might be considered as either secular or sacred. In fact the bitter disputes over Forster's Education Act in 1870 where there had been a long debate over the status of Bible reading in schools proved that this could be an emotive

⁸² J.H.Oldham, 'The Question of the Conscience Clause in India' International Review of Missions Vol. vi No. 21 Jan 1917 pp. 126-7.

issue.⁸³ In any case the overall point seems a fair one.⁸⁴

Occasionally the missionaries attempted to seize the initiative themselves, for example when they suggested new Higher Education institutions on *their* own terms. There was an ingenious plan put forward by the missionaries in the Punjab to create new combined Government and missionary colleges. Each college was to have missionary and Government staff and missionary and Government representatives on the council, though it was generally agreed that Government would have to have the majority because they were also expected to put up two thirds of the cost. Crucial from the missionary point of view was the paragraph:

That the missionary be permitted to teach the Word of God for one hour a day in the College to all students who may of themselves wish to attend his lectures; and that it be one of the rules of each college that students be required to attend only a certain number of lectures of which they may select the subject themselves and of which the Bible lectures shall count as one, should any desire to attend it.⁸⁵

The issue here was: An hour's voluntary religious instruction could be incorporated into the curriculum, without penalising the students' other

⁸³ See J.P.Parry, Democracy and Religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-75 (Cambridge, 1986) p. 302.

⁸⁴ This appears as a newspaper cutting in the CMS archive, but it is not clear what is the source newspaper. The date is 1865.(CMS C I 2/0 10 D/1).

⁸⁵ Suggestions for the establishment of three general colleges for the Punjab, at Lahore, Amritsar and Delhi. (CMS C I 1/04/7/17).

studies.

It should be added that there is no evidence that the government took up the missionaries' suggestions.

Overviews

It might be good to summarise the situation at this point. B.S.Manickam does so neatly, with reference to the Madras presidency, but it was a valid comment for the whole of India.

Co-operation between missionary schools and the Department of Education was good initially but deteriorated. Many of the officials were antagonistic Englishmen or Brahmins and the missionary schools were treated with suspicion. However it was difficult for the schools either to work within the system or without.⁸⁶

This states the problem particularly from the missionary point of view. They regretted their loss of influence in high places which they felt they had once enjoyed, particularly in the era of Alexander Duff. More realistically, A. Mathew emphasises the fears of the government. The missionaries tended to overlook this factor.

⁸⁶ B.S.Manickam, 'Grants in Aid and Christian Missions in Madras Presidency, 1854-1947', Indian Church History Review X111:2 pp. 123-146.

The climate was probably largely changed by the 1857 Revolt. It was believed that the Revolt had had, as one of its causes, the attempts at Christian proselytisation. Hence the policy of strict religious neutrality was reinforced. Indeed the situation was worse. It was difficult to work outside the system or within the system, where a hostile inspectorate clamped on the missionary school a curriculum, textbooks and examinations not at all to their purpose, but essential to students if they wished to go into public service. Thus the main principles of the Wood despatch were effectively contravened. The State did not withdraw, indeed it used the grants-in-aid to increase its influence; it also expanded government involvement.⁸⁷

Other issues

A number of other educational issues naturally surfaced during this long standing debate between the missionaries and the Government. One example was the matter of *vernacular versus English medium education*, long disputed among the missionaries themselves. A petition from the Calcutta Missionary Conference to the Duke of Argyll, the Secretary of State for India, in 1870 included the resounding statement that: 'the time has come when strenuous efforts should be made by the Government and all who seek the good of the country to impart instruction much more largely to those whom English education cannot reach.' This was because the 'great mass of the people' (in Bengal) was woefully ignorant; 'there is a great need for more vernacular

⁸⁷ A Mathew, Christian Missions, Education and Nationalism, From Dominance to compromise 1870-1930 (Anamika Publications, Delhi, 1988).

education.' The missionaries themselves were in favour of English education and the Grants-in-Aid scheme, but wondered whether the time had not come to redress the balance in favour of vernacular education by switching funds from the former to the latter. This could be done by converting Government schools and colleges to Aided ones (full Government institutions were, according to the petitioners, seven times more expensive than Aided ones) and using the money thus saved for vernacular education.⁸⁸

At this point we can fairly ask whether the petition was really about vernacular education. Aided schools were of course largely missionary schools. In other words Government was being invited to get out of higher education in favour of the missionaries. The memorial had a footnote quoting the 'General Report on Instruction in the Lower Provinces of Bengal for 1856-7'...'the Government in place of using its power and resources to compete with private parties, should rather contract and circumscribe its own measures of direct education, and so shape its measures as to pave the way for the ultimate abolition of its own schools'.⁸⁹

Another similar issue to that of vernacular education thrown up by missionary co-operation with government was the *education of outcastes*. Missionaries were the pioneers of Panchama (Harijan or Dalit) education in the Madras Presidency and were the chief workers in the field even at the turn of the

⁸⁸ A petition or memorial from the Calcutta Missionary Conference (20 signatures representing 6 missions) 1870 to Duke of Argyll (Secretary of State for India) (CMS).

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

century.⁹⁰ The influx of Panchamas after 1870 put a tremendous strain on the mission schools. Qualified teachers were in short supply and unqualified teachers did not qualify for grants. Upper caste inspectors were hostile to Panchama schools and conversion to Christianity entailed loss of grants. Rev. W. Hatch addressing a conference of missionaries at Coonoor in Tamil Nadu in 1913 felt that a special opportunity for co-operation - between the Government and missions - had arisen in the area of Panchama education. The Government, the Depressed Classes Mission, and the Theosophical Society, had done little. 'It is still the case that Hindus in general take little interest in these people and practically all that has been done to elevate them is the work of missionary bodies,' quoting from the Director of Public Instruction. This was supported by some statistics that claimed that in the preceding five years private funding - almost all of it from the Missionary Societies - for Panchama education had been twice the amount that Government had contributed. Hatch felt that this was unfair. If anything Government might be expected to make specially generous grants for the education of outcastes. Government support for High Schools was approximately a Rupee for a Rupee spent by the voluntary agencies. Proportionally Panchama education got only half this amount: why was this? There was, of course an answer. Government educational agencies were largely staffed by the products of previous generations of educational endeavour. In past generations the upper castes, particularly the Brahmins themselves had been the great beneficiaries of Western education and indeed had sought English education partly in order to

⁹⁰ See Rev W. Goudie, 'Panchama Education' The Harvest Field Vol. xiii No. 3 (March 1902).

secure Government jobs. They were, on the whole not very keen on the education of lower castes and outcastes.⁹¹

In an indirect way co-operation with government also affected the missionaries' *relationships with the indigenous Indian Christians*. While the missionaries complained about the way in which they had to compete with Government schools, they were perhaps fortunate that in some respects Government did provide alternative educational opportunities. As time went on the missionaries were under increasing pressure to use their schools as a means of educating their converts and raising their prospects in life. This conflicted with the missionary purpose of using the schools as evangelistic opportunities. Also, the constant ground swell of criticism from the home front that schools were a distraction from the real work of missionaries would have risen to a storm if the schools had abandoned their purpose of 'reaching the heathen' altogether. The missionaries would have been trapped between the expectations of their supporters at home and those of the growing Indian church. Elsewhere this was an ongoing problem: the Africa Inland Mission, for example, fought a long battle on ideological grounds against becoming a Mission in which school work figured prominently to the detriment (as they saw it) of the more important work of preaching and establishing churches. African Christians, in this instance, were enraged when the missionaries would not accept government grants (on the grounds that they did not wish to be 'controlled by government'

⁹¹ Rev W. Hatch, 'Co-operation between Government and Missions in Elementary and Secondary Education', a Paper given at Coonoor, Nilgiris, to the South India Missionary Association Conference) The Harvest Field (xxxiii.6) June 1913, pp. 206-15.

but more probably because they did not wish to expand their school work) and felt that the missionaries were deliberately throwing away their (the Africans') opportunities for educational advancement.⁹² In India the situation was less tense because, as time went by, there were Government schools. In effect, the missionaries were more free to do other sorts of missionary work because the Government was progressively entering the field of education and not leaving it all to them.

Secular education

Again and again the missionaries complained against 'purely secular education' as the chief drawback as far as Government schools were concerned. There was more than an echo here of events in England. 'Secular' schools had been one of the great issues in the debate over the Education Act of 1870. The idea that there could be a good school curriculum without some element of religious instruction was simply unthinkable in many quarters. The Earl of Shaftesbury saw 'the whole of the future history of this vast empire...wrapped up in the issue'.⁹³ The missionaries would have agreed. As we have seen, their contention was that the Government, by excluding religious instruction from Government schools and colleges, was producing students who were disillusioned with their own native religion, but had not been offered anything in its place. The missionary antidote to this was of

⁹² See Dick Anderson, We Felt Like Grasshoppers, (Nottingham, 1994) pp. 81-5.

⁹³ J.B.Parry, Democracy and religion: Gladstone and the Liberal Party 1867-1875 (Cambridge, 1986) p.109.

course Christian schools. Perhaps it was from this insight that the competitiveness between the two systems stemmed. The missionary attitude was neatly summarised by Murray Mitchell:

India will have higher education. Chaos is before us if that education be wholly secular. Government cannot give religious education. What remains? The Church of Christ is bound to come to the rescue.

Christian schools and colleges ought to be multiplied all over the land.⁹⁴

Next best was the introduction in Government schools and colleges of an hour's religious instruction every day based on the Bible (and we have seen what a battle there was over this issue). If this was imparted then the rest of the day could be spent in 'secular' instruction.

There was not much idea of teaching all subjects from a Christian perspective or world-view. Many of the missionaries, from Duff onwards, believed that the teaching of secular subjects such as science and geography would undermine the traditional Indian 'Hindu' world-view, and in theory they should have been happy about such teaching wherever it was happening. Wilson in Bombay approached this view most nearly. He responded favourably to the fact that grants-in-aid were to be made to 'heathen' schools and colleges, so long as they were involved 'in the communication of sound secular instruction.' Wilson continued: 'it does not seem to us to recognise any principle of religious

⁹⁴ J.Murray Mitchell, In Western India, (Edinburgh, 1899).

latitudinarianism. It simply offers to all a common blessing. Sound secular instruction, imparted without any ignoring or depreciating of Christianity, can in no degree favour heathenism or error of any kind.' He was careful to add that what he had just said did not compromise 'our own views of the supreme importance of the combination of right religious education and secular instruction.'⁹⁵ Nevertheless, to some extent Wilson was letting the cat out of the bag. Was he not admitting that secular education was a worthwhile goal in itself?

Perhaps the regular use of non-Christian teachers in missionary schools - something which often shocked the home constituency (How can a heathen impart Christian education?) - also indicated that for many missionaries education did not have to be Christian education in order to be worthwhile. (They might not have admitted this but their alliance with the Government in the grants-in-aid scheme, which involved working with those who were giving them financial aid but certainly not to do Christian work as such, might have given them a clue.) Wilson was in favour of employing non-Christian teachers, or rather he was not opposed to their employment, if Christian teachers were not available. His 'rules' for such employment illustrate the distinctions he made between secular and sacred. I list the rules below:

1. The non-Christian teachers agree not to teach heathenism.
2. They are only used in 'the mechanical processes of teaching'.
3. The Bible continues to be given prominence in the school because the Bible

⁹⁵ Smith, Life of John Wilson p. 534.

and Bible-truth are 'self-defensory, and to a certain extent self-explanatory'.

4. 'Hortative and explicative' teaching is given by the missionaries and native Christians. If this is properly done, other disadvantages connected with non-Christian staff will be compensated for.

5. There is an evangelistic outreach to the teachers.⁹⁶

Wilson had a typically Enlightenment view of the truth. It could be taught propositionally in a mechanical way. It did not matter what the teachers believed as long as they were only involved in 'the mechanical processes of teaching'. The Bible could simply be let loose to do its own work. Its truths would triumph whether adequate Bible teachers were found or not.

What also connects with the Enlightenment was the missionaries' conviction that knowledge as conveyed in schools and colleges would be the key factor in shaping the future. This was one reason why the missionaries were so fiercely combative over the issue of secular education. William Miller, at the Edinburgh Conference in 1910, put it this way. 'It is a question whether the dominating influence in the future history of three hundred millions of the human race shall be religious, on the one hand, or purely secular and materialistic on the other.'⁹⁷

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p. 437.

⁹⁷ World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission III Education in Relation to The Christianisation of National Life (Edinburgh and London, 1910) p. 446.

Conclusions

As was suggested at the beginning of this chapter the aims of missionary education in India often came up for examination in the course of its long association with the government. Particularly in the area of higher education the missionaries found themselves as partners in an enterprise which provided education for students who wanted 'a good education' in terms of culture, status and career prospects. Except for the odd case, these students were not interested in a change of religion - they certainly did not see Christian schools and colleges as providing them an opportunity to 'get to know about the Christian faith'. What they wanted from the Christian (missionary) schools was what they wanted from the government schools. The grants-in-aid system with its inspectorate designed to ensure that 'efficient' education took place in 'secular' subjects held the missionaries to this purpose, as did the desire of the students themselves to succeed in these same subjects. Under these pressures it was difficult to see what was the specifically Christian aim of the missionary run school. Of course it was possible to fall back on a general diffusion theory: that the gospel was being disseminated in a subterranean sort of way through the benign influence of the contact between Christian staff and non-Christian students.⁹⁸ Besides, the hour of daily Scripture instruction was not, in most cases, abandoned, and much faith was pinned on its efficacy. Some of the more specific educational aims of the missionaries, however, were clearly compromised. Conversions in a direct way through class room contact were not in fact an outcome. While Indian Christians were welcome to take

⁹⁸ See below chapter 9.

advantage of the new educational opportunities they were forced to compete with their Hindu and Muslim neighbours and there was little thought of the original purpose of missionary education - to raise up an effective native agency. These comments do not necessarily apply to village or primary schools, as we shall see in the next chapter, but in secondary and particularly higher education they applied across the board to all the missions involved and to every part of the country.

In dealing with government the cry that was raised again and again was that government education was 'purely secular'. It was therefore unworthy of a Christian government, inadequate educationally, and dangerously subversive of good morals. As has been noted, we hear echoes here of the debate which surrounded education in Britain and the storm raised against the so-called 'godless schools' of Forster's Education Act (1870). At least in the British debate some Christians, the nonconformists in particular, appreciated the way that the schools delivered them from the pressures of other religious systems. In India the missionaries were united in their condemnation of 'secular' government schools and remained so. It might have been helpful to define the word 'secular' more carefully. Could it be applied to any education which was not specifically religious? Was any school or College which omitted the one hour daily of religious instruction a 'purely secular' school? On a more positive note, was it possible to teach so-called secular subjects from a Christian perspective?

In practice the criticism of 'secular' education was that it removed the 'false' religious underpinnings from the Hindu and Muslim students but did not replace it with anything positive. This produced atheists and infidels rather than Christians. We shall encounter this issue again ⁹⁹ but a close look at Christian secondary schools and Higher Education institutions suggests that the same process was going on in them. What the missionaries may not have realised was that secularism was exported to India by Western education itself. One hour of daily Bible instruction could not nullify the underlying message that was being conveyed by missionary and government school alike. It was the similarity which existed between missionary and government schools which allowed them to work together over the course of a century or so. Disagreements between missionaries and government may have been more superficial than either side believed at the time.

This worked both ways, however. Missionaries may have imparted education that was more 'secular' than they imagined, but equally government was more often 'Christian government' than they bargained for. The shrewd Henry Venn saw this ¹⁰⁰ when he pointed out that changes in the law (such as the abolition of sati or female infanticide) had not been carried through by the government on the basis of some 'secular' stance but rather as a response to the general feeling that a Christian government could not allow such practices. Why then not accept the logical outcome that a Christian government should provide Christian education, just as it provided Christian laws? The weakness of

⁹⁹ See below chapter 10.

¹⁰⁰ See above p. 211.

Venn's argument was that in fact the government of India (and indeed of Britain) was only partially committed to Christian standards. In many cases it did indeed have a rationalist, secular stance. It expressed this alongside the residual Christian influences that it had inherited from the Evangelical revival and other Christian traditions.

Much of the argument centred around another idea, that of 'moral education'. Nineteenth century educationists universally proclaimed that good education was moral education. Indeed the inculcation of moral standards was, in many cases, thought to be what education was about. The further question (one still very much debated today) was to what extent morality depended on religion. Was it possible to inculcate one without the other? Answers to these questions very much affected the debate on 'secular' education. If it was not possible to inculcate morality except by means of right religion then 'secular' education would fail at the point where education, or so it was believed, must succeed or else be accounted worthless. It was considerations like these which produced such a fierce debate over 'secular education'.

While it is clear what the missionaries wanted from government – as much financial support for their schools as the government could afford, and at least some religious instruction in government schools – it is not as easy to understand what the government hoped to gain from their alliance with the missionaries. Was the government, for example, less and less enamoured, as time went on, with the terms of the Wood Despatch and the way it was operating in practice? The evidence is that they did indeed have second

thoughts and the missionaries were right in suspecting that the government had changed its policy. Two reasons for this are advanced here. It became clearer as time went by that voluntary education was never going to meet India's educational needs. This meant that government education had to expand hugely. But if, in many areas, perforce government had to 'go it alone', this also meant that government was less dependent on the voluntary sector. This is also a possible explanation for what seems something of a mystery. In an age of Liberal rhetoric which consistently lauded the virtues of self-help, independence from government, and voluntary effort, how was it that the government, though consistently reminded by the missionaries that their educational effort was a shining example of precisely these virtues, never seemed greatly interested in this argument? Even the trump card: that this would save the government money, does not seem to have been very effective. When one thinks of the contemporary Gladstonian approach to Empire, government withdrawal from responsibility and particularly the minimisation of government expenditure were considered to be highly desirable principles. Perhaps very different thinking was going on in Calcutta and Madras than in London.

Secondly government education departments became increasingly composed of men who were anti-Christian. Voluntary schools and colleges in India meant Christian schools in the main. (This was true in Britain also, of course, but in Britain there was a powerful and vociferous Christian public.) It was not the voluntary nature of the education but its Christian claims that education departments suspected. Certainly, and this may have been the most important

factor of all, the after effects of the Indian Mutiny, as already suggested, were long lasting in the thinking of British administrators. Despite missionary pressure those in government consistently harked back to their prevailing sense that the 'age of reform' and especially its educational initiatives, had brought government too close to Christianity in a country where the population was overwhelmingly non-Christian. If Britain was to maintain her grip on India then religious neutrality was a necessary way forward. For the missionaries this was a bitter disappointment.

Finally, in the general context of Christian bodies and government, it is worth reflecting on how different the situation was in India from that in Britain. First of all the Christians seemed to be behaving differently in India! Anyone who reads the history of the church in nineteenth century Britain cannot but be struck by the bitter and interminable disputes between various sections of the Christian church: Latitudinarians versus Tractarians, Liberals versus Evangelicals; Church of England versus Nonconformists; Evangelicals versus Moderates in Scotland; and of course Protestants versus Roman Catholics. However, to a large extent these seemed to drop away in India, at least within Protestantism. Joint Missionary conferences became common. Education committees could make representations to government on behalf of 'all the missionary societies working in education in South India.' Madras Christian College was constituted as an interdenominational venture. Everyone, nonconformist and Church of England alike, seemed happy to accept government grants, and then to protest against government non-implementation of the full force of the Wood Despatch. Issues which split the

church in England, such as the 'conscience clause', united the missionaries in India. Perhaps the missionaries felt that they had too many common enemies – Hinduism, secular government, sometimes even the indifferent or misunderstanding public back in Britain – to fight amongst themselves. Whatever the reasons, the educational missionaries maintained a remarkably common cause in India, and when they did disagree it tended not to be on conventional ecclesiastical lines.

In fact the only major cause of disagreement seems to have been created by the context. The educational missionaries who worked in the villages amongst the poor and illiterate often disagreed in method and aims with those who worked in the towns and cities amongst the higher castes. This contrast is the subject of the next three chapters. Village education in the context of the mass movements and the growth of Christianity in the South is described in chapter 7. Chapters 8 and 9 by contrast consider education amongst elite urban groups with a special focus on Delhi.

Chapter 7: Growth in the South: Education for the Poor

As Geoffrey Oddie has reminded us:

As a result of their movement out into the countryside in increasing numbers after 1815, the missionaries became better acquainted with the depressed class problems than most other Europeans...Furthermore it was the peasantry and poorer class people who were among the converts even before the advent of the large scale and more dramatic depressed class movements into Christianity during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. ¹

Many missionaries were convinced that this work 'on the side of the poor' was one of the evidences that Christianity was morally superior to other religions. Indeed this idea, that Christians cared in a special way for those less fortunate than themselves, became an important part of Christian polemic. To their work amongst the 'depressed classes' or Dalits – those outside the caste system or with a tenuous and lowly position within it – was added their work amongst women, also considered disadvantaged and in need of special help and protection. It was because of this approach that education was considered to be such an important part of the missionary programme and particularly education that could be seen to be raising people's status and prospects. Thus, statistics about literacy and people 'getting on' as a result of their education, were particularly important in the missionary literature, as were details of progress in providing schools for girls and colleges for women.

¹ G.A.Oddie, 'Missionaries as Social Commentators: The Indian Case' in R.Bickers and R.Seton eds., Missionary Encounters, Sources and Issues (Richmond, 1996) pp. 198-9.

This tendency was understandably accentuated by the comparatively large influx of Christians into the church from rural and village situations during the nineteenth century culminating in the so-called 'mass movements'.² There were a number of these with a nationwide spread,³ and by the turn of the century influential voices were proposing that the church should concentrate its resources not on education for the elite in the cities, but on the country districts where other mass movements among the marginalised might occur. This was opposed by the majority of missionary thinkers, particularly by educational missionaries like those working in higher education, on the grounds that the higher castes represented the future of the new India. It was in higher education, they argued, that the national movement was able to witness the Christian church contributing something worthwhile to the nation. If that connection was abandoned then the new India would have lost touch with Christianity altogether. Later, it was hoped, a national Indian church would take up concern for the poor.⁴

Nevertheless if significant numbers were becoming Christians in the villages the church could not afford to ignore the implications. In fact, how these movements affected the missionary educators is an important question for this study.

Evidence from the South

² There has been considerable debate as to whether the term 'mass movements' is a suitable one. Hugald Grafe, for example, prefers 'group movements'. (H. Grafe, History of Christianity in India: Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Bangalore, 1990) p. 92.

³ See p.290 n.55 for details.

⁴ D. O'Connor, Gospel, Raj and Swaraj: The Missionary Years of C.F. Andrews 1904-14 (Frankfurt a-m, 1990) pp.161-2.

Evidence of missionary attitudes and achievements can be found in the work of the SPG in South India, and, as an introduction, we can observe the labours of William Hickey, an SPG missionary amongst the Poliar, a tribal group, in the Palni (Pulney) Hills in North Tamil Nadu. The work had begun in 1847, when, according to the official account, two Poliar headmen had sought out Hickey and told him that they understood that his religion 'was one of mercy to the poor'. They asked him to receive them and their people (over 1,000 of them) under Christian instruction. The two headmen were baptised with 381 others. A catechist, S.G.Coyle, laboured among them for six and a half years. The Mission withdrew in favour of the American Board (Congregationalist) Mission in 1857.⁵ Hickey, finding himself in a typical 'group movement' wrote to the SPG Secretary of the District Committee in Madras in 1849 about his difficulties:

Mr Coyle [the local catechist] and the [other] catechists complain...but we cannot help this state of things at present. Time will be required for Scripture truths to grow familiar in their minds; till then we must labour in hope under difficulties of no ordinary nature, and impart a sound and simple education to the rising generation to whom we must look for the pleasing results and blessings of Christian teaching, and for the amelioration of the whole of the Poliar tribe.⁶

Coyle himself had something to say about all this. He seemed inclined to abandon the present generation whom he considered hopeless:

⁵ C.F.Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG, An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1900, 2 vols. (London, 1901) p. 554.

⁶ Rev W. Hickey to the Secretary of the SPG District Committee of the Pulney Hills, 19 October 1849, citing the catechist, Mr Coyle (USPG D.4(A).42).

They are not much less ignorant at present of Christian truths than before their conversion, and so hopeless do I sometimes feel of any considerable numbers of them ever being brought within the enlightening and regenerating influence of the Gospel of Christ, that I am led to conclude, our chief concern ought to be for the instruction of the Poliards of the rising generation.⁷

Coyle commended his 'little Boarding and Day School' which he trusted would one day 'be greatly effectual in raising the moral and intellectual character of this most interesting people to such a standard of purity and excellence, as shall cause all the lovers of Zion to rejoice.' This was of course just one example of the sort of approach common enough in a 'responsive' tribal situation. The missionary literature was full of reports of this sort.

Fuller evidence can be drawn from Tirunelveli (Tinnevely) District in South Tamil Nadu, because, by general agreement, the work there and particularly among the Shanars or Nadars⁸, provides one of the most spectacular accounts of missionary education, indeed it is often held up as an example of the success of the educational policy. Robert Caldwell ⁹, who was working amongst the Nadars in the

⁷ Report of the catechist, Coyle, on the work in the Pulney Hills, 13 October, 1849 (USPG: D.4(A).42).

⁸ The Tamil Shanars have preferred, in recent history, to be called Nadars, originally the name of wealthy (Shanar) traders. I shall use the term Nadar throughout.

⁹ Robert Caldwell (1814-92) reached Madras in 1838 as an LMS missionary but in 1841 became an Anglican and joined the SPG. He settled at Idaiyangudi where in less than three years he was superintending 21 congregations and 9 schools. This was part of the Nadar 'mass movement'. Caldwell was a considerable scholar. His work proved invaluable in the revival of Tamil literature and culture after 1840. See especially A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages (1856).

District from 1841 onwards, provides a source. Conversions were not the problem. Thousands were becoming Christians.¹⁰ In 1852 the Bishop of Madras, speaking of Tirunelveli and Tanjore Districts, claimed that superior schools were needed 'for the thousands and tens of thousands of native Christians both male and female'. Schools were seen as part of the process of 'christianising'.¹¹ Caldwell and his colleagues were concerned about the needs of communities which had 'placed themselves under Christian instruction. The whole community has to be moulded into a new shape...Few people but Missionaries know what the remodelling of a community means.'¹² Caldwell's theory, like that of the catechist Coyle above, was that however unpromising the older converts might appear as spiritual leaders, at least 'we have their children...in school...to bring up from the first in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and the fact that their parents are at least nominally Christian means that they will not oppose the process.' Caldwell here stood on its head the usual fears about 'second generation' Christians.¹³

How far Caldwell and his colleagues were succeeding in this purpose of moulding the community into a new shape can be judged by an impressive tribute to the work of Christian schools in Tirunelveli District, from the government inspector of schools, Mr.

¹⁰ By 1851 the Nadars comprised more than half the Christian converts registered with Protestant missions in India. Of the total 91,092 Christians 51,355 belonged to the CMS, SPG and LMS missions working in South India amongst the Nadars. See J.Richter, A History of Missions in India (Edinburgh, 1908) p. 201.

¹¹ Caldwell wrote on one occasion: 'The aim of the school [the village schools in the Tirunelveli district] is '...to pour the light of truth into their [the students'] minds - to win them to Christ - to train them up for usefulness on earth and for happiness in heaven.' R.Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Mission, (London, 1857) p. 97.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 126.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 96.

Richards. School inspectors became important figures after the Grants-in-Aid system was introduced as a result of the Wood Despatch in 1854, as they determined whether an independent school was of a sufficient standard to receive a grant. Richards was clearly sympathetic to Christianity, but this does not devalue his testimony. It is worth quoting in some detail. 'No attempt (is) made in them', said Richards, 'to develop any other faculty of the mind, but the memory ... the children are taught to read without intelligence ... to perform arithmetical operations mechanically, the principles being nowhere understood even by the Masters.' On the other hand, he believed that the above 'is the highest standard of education attained, or attainable in these schools' and that the proportion of students reaching this standard 'are higher than in any other part of India'. Further the village schools demonstrate 'a marked superiority over others of the same class elsewhere' despite the villagers' many economic disadvantages.

Richards continued:

I think it my duty however to point out the fact that throughout the obscurest hamlets of at present an inferior race in a remote corner of the Peninsula there is now going forward through the medium of village schools what I find nowhere else, a gradual development of the human mind and a rapid diffusion of actual knowledge, and that not merely of the highest kind bearing on the moral and spiritual interests of the people, but including much of a miscellaneous nature, bearing on their temporal interests likewise. This is the most successful effort for improvement of indigenous education which has been yet made in India.

The Boarding Schools - usually personally superintended by the missionary himself and

located in the home - appeared, according to Richards - to be a sort of teacher (or catechist) training school i.e. the best students were chosen from the village schools to go on, it was hoped, to be teachers and catechists and then to keep the system going. These boarding schools were supported by the Mission, and were also English medium.

Richards was most impressed by the Girls' Boarding School (vernacular medium). While gaining an elementary education the best achievement was that the girls

are brought into continual contact with the European Ladies and learn to acquire their habits. The manifest influence of this training in their manners, their general bearing and even on their physical condition presented a most gratifying spectacle.¹⁴

Richards' testimony was important. Here was a Government schools' inspector wholeheartedly commending the missionary schools for the work they were doing not only in terms of 'pure' education, but as a means for the social amelioration of the people. Whatever the specific aims of the missionaries in doing their educational work, it is clear that they were succeeding at this level.¹⁵

Furthermore Christians were gaining an advantage over their non-Christian neighbours. The forty-first annual report of the American Madura Mission¹⁶ in 1875

¹⁴ Report by School Inspector, Mr Richards on village schools, 21, April, 1856. The full report is in the USPG archive.

¹⁵ There has been a great deal of debate recently about the role of missionaries in social amelioration through education. I have attempted to summarise the arguments in the last section of this chapter.

¹⁶ Forty first annual report of the American Madura Mission, 1875, published in Madura in 1876. Pamphlet in USPG Missions Collection.

proudly reported that eleven and a half per cent of Christians in the district attended school, compared to one in 230 of the population in general. Literacy was improving in the Christian community as a result. Twenty seven per cent could now read and write and this was about five times the norm for the rest of the population. In the Madras Presidency in 1901 about 14% of the Christian population were literate over against 6% of the Hindus and 7% of the Muslims.¹⁷

To these general claims can be added the example of one well known family, in this case from among the Nadars. The famous V.S. Azariah, the first Indian bishop, came from a Nadar family. His grandfather was a trader with at most an elementary education. His father, however, completed high school and ministerial training. His half-brothers both had a series of higher degrees and assumed important roles in the missionary education system. One of them S.V.Thomas, was considered for the post of Professor of Sanskrit in Cambridge University. Though Azariah himself was not primarily a scholar, he was, an international traveller and a prolific author.¹⁸ When Azariah became Bishop of Dornakal (1912) one of his great priorities for the church (village Christians from a low caste background) under his leadership was the training of teachers and pastors for the village congregations. In this he already had a model. His own father, Thomas Vedanayagam, had become a catechist and then an ordained Anglican minister, through a scheme set up by the Welsh CMS missionary John Thomas, who had instituted a village based catechist training scheme. This included Tamil medium Bible study, church history, Christian doctrine, homiletics and pastoral care relevant to a village setting. All this in contrast with the more formal training available elsewhere, which was conducted in English and

¹⁷ Grafe, Tamilnadu in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries p. 200.

¹⁸ S.Billington-Harper, 'Azariah and Indian Christianity during the Late Years of the Raj' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis of the University of Oxford, 1991) pp. 30-1.

included the Biblical languages.¹⁹ Azariah set up similar training opportunities in Dornakal in order to respond to what was the usual request from recently 'converted' villages in a mass movement situation, 'send us a teacher'. The teacher was expected not only to organise church life but in due course to build and organise a school, thereby providing elementary education for the children and literacy classes for adults.²⁰ These were not just pious plans. Originally an obscure corner of the Anglican missionary enterprise, Dornakal diocese had become, by 1935, almost a showcase for Christian 'social uplift'. It could boast 250 ordained Indian clergy, and 2,000 village teachers, with an extensive network of schools, dispensaries, cooperative societies, banks, printing presses, agricultural settlements and industrial projects. There were 218,879 Anglican communicants. As the Bishop himself claimed, the gospel was not only 'the power of God unto salvation', but also 'power unto rural uplift, unto economic freedom and unto social advance'.²¹

C.F. Pascoe, the historian of the SPG, even before such dramatic successes as Azariah's work at Dornakal, looking back in 1901 on the extensive SPG work in India claimed that 'Education has been the great lever in raising the tone and position of the whole class amongst whom Christianity chiefly prevails.'²² He was speaking, of course, about the lower classes in this instance. Here is a description of what Pascoe had in mind, an account of the work among the Panchamas (Malas) in Andhra Pradesh.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp.189-90.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 250 cited from Dornakal Diocesan Magazine xiii.4. (April 1936).

¹² Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG p. 553c.

... when formed into congregations under the care of earnest and capable teachers, they make marked progress, materially, intellectually, and morally. Their gross ignorance disappears, they become cleaner and decent in their persons and homes; they give up cattle poisoning and grain stealing, two crimes particularly associated with their class; they abstain from the practice of infant marriage and concubinage, to which almost all classes of Hindu society are addicted; they lose much of the old servile spirit which led them to grovel at the feet of their social superiors, and they acquire some sense of the rights and dignity which belong to them as men.²³

One might say, judging from the literature, that the changes mentioned by Pascoe above may not have been the specific aims of the missionaries in every case, but they no doubt were pleased, and were pleased to take the credit, when it happened. Pascoe claimed that: 'in many schools and colleges Christian lads of Panchama origin are holding their own with, and in not a few cases are actually outstripping, their Brahmin competitors. Even a Brahmin Government official as well as an R.C. magistrate have testified to the great improvement in the people of the Society's mission.'²⁴

Were the educational opportunities only for Christians? Robert Caldwell, as we have seen, clearly saw the schools as generating and nurturing a new generation of Christian leaders. Yet it was seldom that the missionaries ran an exclusion policy i.e. designating the schools as for the children of converts only. When schooling statistics are examined it is surprising to find how numerous the non-Christian students were, even in an area

²³ *ibid.*, p. 553.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 556a.

where there had been mass conversions to Christianity. In Tirunelveli District in 1856 there were 317 schools (mostly what we would call village schools) with 7802 scholars of which 5116 were Christians and 2,686 were Hindus. In other districts where Christianity had not spread so rapidly the numbers of non-Christians could be much higher proportionally. For example, in the Palaiyamkottai (Palamcottah) District, where there were also fewer schools, there were only 16 Christians, but 142 Hindus and 16 Muslims receiving education.²⁵ Of course this also demonstrates that where there were more Christians there were more schools. There is no doubt, therefore, that although the CMS and other missions did not maintain a policy of running schools exclusively for the children of Christians, they did take seriously their responsibility to educate these children.

Where the children of Christians did benefit was that they were encouraged to go on through the system. S.S.Kohlkoff, an SPG missionary at Erungalore in South India, wrote to the Society's Committee in Madras (June 1852) about the boarding school for girls opened in 1845 and one for boys opened in 1849.

Both the boys and the girls maintained in these schools are of Christian parents and being taken from the outstations are entirely under our control. Their daily attendance at Church as well as lessons they are taught in the Secondary School, will, it is sincerely hoped, under God's blessing, fix in their tender minds those Divine truths which shall promote their future usefulness and eternal welfare.²⁶

²⁵ Part of the report by the School Inspector, Mr Richards. (USPG).

²⁶ Rev S.S.Kohlkoff to the SPG Committee in Madras, 25 June, 1852 (USPG D.4(A).148).

These 'elitist' schools were intended to add the vital element of character formation. In the thinking of the time this was an essential ingredient, without which education could scarcely be described as education at all. Richards, as we have seen, rejoiced that the girls in the boarding schools were brought into daily contact with European ladies so that they could copy their habits.²⁷ Bishop Caldwell describing the same sort of schools (he was referring specifically to the Female Boarding School at Idaiyangudi (Edeyenkoody) believed that one of its most important functions was 'training up a certain number of the more promising daughters of our native Christians to be specimens and patterns to the rest of the people of what Christian women ought to be, and thus, of raising the character of the female portion of the community.' But he was also a pragmatist. The Female Boarding School was an industrial school with a lace-making facility. The fact that women could bring in an income made the idea of women's education more popular in the community, 'proving to the men that women really can learn when they are taught, that they really can turn their learning at times to some profitable account, and that female education is far from being either the chimerical or dangerous thing they had supposed it to be.' He added: 'it [the success of female education] proved that if Christianity finds any class of the community degraded, it does not leave them as it found them, but sets about restoring them from their degraded condition.'²⁸

The education of females

The resounding and also typical assertion by Bishop Caldwell provides a good introduction to the missionaries' attitude to female education. As we have said, this

²⁷ See above p.270.

²⁸ R.Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevely Mission (London, 1857) p.108.

enterprise was considered to be particularly suitable for missionaries, and an evidence of their calling to be on the side of those who were downtrodden and disadvantaged. This was true even if women were materially well off. Retrospective evaluations of the missionary contribution to female education made this point again and again. Nora Brockway in her well informed review of the issues ²⁹ does not suggest that female education was carried on for significantly different educational reasons than male education. The Principal of Kinnaird College in Lahore, the first women's College in the Punjab, said in 1923: 'The College has definite aims: to show sympathy with Indians of all classes; to continue to act as the friends of Indians right through their Christian career; to prepare India for self-government; to make a true presentation of Christianity to non-Christians. And to make it possible for Indian Christians to let their light so shine before non-Christians that all may see their good works and glorify God.' ³⁰ There is nothing here that relates specifically to female education. The point that was frequently made, however, was that there was something revolutionary (and Christian) about the fact that females were educated at all. That public attitudes had progressed from indifference, through ridicule and criticism to final acceptance was a cause for celebration.

At the same time the element of social revolution was often carefully played down. It was felt that women should certainly not be educated out of their station in life. Their training should enable them to become better wives and mothers, though there might also be, in some cases, a vocational element in their education so that they could contribute to the

²⁹ K.Nora Brockway, A Larger Way for Women: Aspects of Christian Education for Girls in South India, 1712-1948 (Madras, 1949).

³⁰ J.Pollock, Shadows Fall Apart: The Story of the Zenana and Bible Medical Fellowship (London, 1958) p. 124.

family economy. Quite late on further consideration was given to the possibility of a more rounded education, with women enjoying some of the intellectual blessings which were commonly supposed to attend education for men. Always, however, there was a concern that women should not 'forget their place' and become over intellectualised or aggressive.

Women were not to be trained as leaders; it was assumed that they did not have a leadership role, either in the church or the nation. On the other hand it was recognised that they did have influence. Rosemary Fitzgerald has shown that one of the reasons for the growth of women's medical missions – both in number and prestige – was the feeling that women were highly influential in Indian society. It was also felt, particularly in the case of Muslims and the higher Hindu castes – that they were almost impossible to reach by conventional methods.³¹ The problem of women's seclusion was met by the 'storming of the zenana' and the first wave consisted not of medical missionaries but of women educators, 'wielding the crochet-needle and the school book'.³² Indeed as late as 1873, W.J.Elmslie, in an article entitled 'On Female Medical Missions in India', regretted that education was the only key to date that could open the 'inner social life of India'.³³ The theme of women's influence on succeeding generations, through the home, was important because it was the way that the missionary educators felt that some of their important missionary aims could be realised. Raising up a native Christian agency, spreading Christian influence and even conversions to Christianity might all be possible through a woman operating within her own household. Significantly as the literature advocating medical mission developed it often seemed to take up the same themes as those found in

³¹ See R.Fitzgerald, 'A "Peculiar and Exceptional Measure", the Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India in the Later Nineteenth Century' in R.Bickers and R.Seton eds., Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues (London, 1996) pp. 180-1.

³² *ibid.*, p.182.

³³ *ibid.*, p. 182-3.

the discussion of educational mission. When converts were few, concerns were expressed that the huge demands of the medical work were making it impossible for the medical missionaries to 'preach the gospel'. The same criticism was levelled at the teacher 'trapped in the classroom'. Much comfort was sought and found in the 'leavening' process that was supposedly going on as a result of the medical work.³⁴ Similarly the diffusion of the gospel through education, as our next chapter describes, was a vital part of the missionary polemic in favour of the educational method.

Some of these themes: the importance of women's education because of their influence in the home, the danger of educating women 'out of their station', the key role that Christians had taken in women's education and how this could be sustained, were being keenly discussed at the end of our period. This was part of the general ferment of discussion about missionary education which is described in chapter 10. M.L. Butler, the Principal of the London Mission Girls' High School in Bangalore, gave a paper at the Bangalore Missionary Conference in 1913, and while adopting a rather defensive position, she nevertheless spoke as one who could be confident that her attempt to raise the profile of female education would be well received. She reviewed the Indian woman's historical, literary and customary heritage and suggested that the most familiar picture was that of the meek and faithful wife, at best true guide to her husband. Though history recorded women who were religious and military leaders and some who had literary gifts, on the whole tradition and custom seemed currently a 'dead hand'. She quoted Narayan Chandravarkar: 'Hinduism of late ages has kept her down. Even when purdah is not strictly observed, the woman's life is narrow and circumscribed. She has been denied education and has little to talk about that is uplifting.' The Laws of Manu were

³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 194, 186.

particularly cited as the offender.

Against this background Butler examined more closely the view that Indian women were 'kept down'. She wondered whether this was no more than the point of view of a typical Western individualism. The 'influence' of women, through the home, was stressed. While she herself attacked the idea that the education of women was harmful, she accepted a secondary role for women, and quoted Ruskin:

We hear of the 'mission' and the 'rights of women' as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of man. And not less wrong is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience...As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily, by a slave.

How then could education help? Not by denationalising. Butler was firmly against making the girls feel that 'the old ideals are all wrong'. For example, the girls must not be put off domestic duties. This did not mean a lower standard of education was desirable. 'No one who has seen the effect upon Indian girls of a more liberal education would for a moment seriously contemplate lowering the standard.' There was a problem: the idea of a professional woman was not unknown in India but 'a majority of women have always and naturally preferred marriage and motherhood.' It was hard to find Indian woman teachers as a result.

Butler concluded that the West should do nothing to undermine the noble Indian ideals for women of service and mother love, but nevertheless Western education could rightly

promote self reliance and independence. Also 'service' might rightly become service to the nation as well as service in the home.³⁵

Margaret Brotherton, who was in charge of the YWCA hostel in Madras and had come from a background of women's colleges in Britain, writing in The Harvest Field in the same year as M.L. Butler gave her address, also spoke out for the education of women, indeed for higher education.

The usual criticism is 'Higher education is not suitable for Indian girls, Indian men want wives and mothers, not University graduates.' But...experience in every land has shown that when women have begun to demand higher education, however small at first the demand may be, yet it cannot be smothered or gainsaid. The wise and statesmanlike thing to do is to direct the demand along such lines as shall lead educated women into a sympathetic understanding and serious acceptance of their responsibilities in view of the social environment in which they are placed.

She added an interesting educational argument in reply to the criticism that women were not yet ready for higher education in India, particularly as there was too little elementary and secondary education. Her response to this was that the educational system was like an electric circuit which had to be complete in all its parts to function properly e.g. a higher education component was necessary to provide secondary teachers.³⁶

³⁵ M.L. Butler, 'The Heritage of Indian Women' The Harvest Field xxxiii/4 & 5, April and May, 1913, pp. 124-35 and 174-82.

³⁶ M. Brotherton, 'The Higher Education of Women in South India' The Harvest Field xxxiii/4, April 1913, pp. 135-48.

Butler and Brotherton, it seems, were chiefly concerned with the 'social uplift' of women and the effect that this would have on society at large. Ruth Robinson, a worker with the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Lucknow, writing in The Harvest Field in 1916, related women's education more specifically to the mission of the church. She claimed that up to the time of writing, it was Christian schools that had controlled higher education for girls in the United Provinces and that the girls so educated had been largely from the Christian community. She was happy that the schools were increasingly popular with non-Christians, but believed that the chief aim of the schools must be the preparation of Indian Christian women. Like many others she claimed that this was an evangelistic strategy. 'It has become commonplace to say that India will be in the end won for Christ, not by Europeans or Americans, but by the Indians themselves. This is the chief argument for the maintenance of first class mission schools and colleges.'³⁷

Robinson was right in saying that this argument had become a commonplace. It is heard again and again. Take for example this extract from a speech made by Miss Mackenzie, the Secretary to the Women's Missionary Association as part of the commemoration of fifty years of SPG work in Delhi. She summarises the women's work as threefold 1. education 2. zenana ministry 3. medical. The most important was the educational. 'In the schools, we all agree, lies the hope of the future.' Why was that? 'There are brought up the Christian wives and mothers of a future generation. The boarding schools...will be the nursing homes of the future Christians in Delhi and the neighbourhood.'³⁸ Robinson's further argument was that the mass movements made this all the more necessary. Not so

³⁷ R.E. Robinson, 'Higher Education for Christian Women in the United Provinces' in The Harvest Field xxxvi/7, July 1916, pp. 251-6.

³⁸ Speech by Miss Mackenzie recorded in Occasional Paper 30 of the CMD, 1902 (CMD 129).

much because it was likely that the outcastes, who formed the majority of the converts in the mass movements, needed education more than their fellow countrymen and women (though this argument was used by some) but rather because there were so many to be educated all at one time, and the process of higher education (of which she had been speaking) was the only means of producing the requisite number of teachers.

She was concerned that in the circumstances standards be maintained.

If only their standard of efficiency can be maintained, it means that for years to come non-Christian girls wishing to study beyond the Middle School Exam will enter mission schools. It is said that so great was Dr Miller's influence and the confidence he inspired, that every family in the Madras Presidency with boys to educate turned with longing eyes to his college ... He believed, as one has said, that 'one thoroughly first-class Christian institution, easily the best of its kind, will do more to demonstrate the superiority of Christian education, strengthen the church and bless the nation, than 40 schools of similar name or higher pretension, working below the point of efficiency'.

Maintaining the standards of the missionary schools, she admitted, was a difficult task.

Their contribution has been great, but modern conditions demand something more. Old schools must be remodelled, new schools started, independent work must be done in adapting curricula to Indian ideas and the special needs of girls, the whole education machinery must be raised to the level of the standard required for men if the opportunity for imparting this spiritual power is to be retained.

It would be a false economy to attempt to reduce the role of overseas missionary staff but this must not be allowed to interfere with the plan of placing upon the Indian and Anglo Indian teachers in mission schools, 'all the responsibility possible and granting them all the recognition, socially and professionally, that is possible.' There followed criticism of many missionaries in this respect. 'The extreme reluctance of some missionaries to grant equality of position to those worthy of it is, however, amazing.'³⁹

It can be seen from the above that one of Robinson's chief concerns was the unavailability of teachers - for a variety of reasons - to staff the missionary educational enterprise, a concern she shared with other missionaries in education. With reference to one particular sphere, Robinson was reverting to one of the original missionary concerns. There was much to be done but it could only be done by raising up a 'native agency'.

In this brief review of opinion about women's education we have, once again, the missionary thinkers moving between a number of aims: evangelism, raising up a 'native agency', diffusion of Christian standards and principles, and general social uplift. All of these might be seen in the light of the great influence wielded by women. In addition some pride is expressed that Christians have been first in the field and some reassurances offered that women's education is not subversive of good order.

Caste

This account gives the impression that in large parts of South India where there had been

³⁹ R.E. Robinson, Higher Education for Christian Women p. 255.

substantial Christian penetration the missionaries had matters much their own way, particularly in the educational field. This depended somewhat on the district and on the type of education work. Local realities still had to be encountered. Typically, there was opposition over the way in which missionary education challenged the caste system. Many of the early educational missionaries were fiercely opposed to caste. Carey and his colleagues at Serampore certainly were, and so were the Scottish missionaries.⁴⁰ G.A.Oddie and Duncan Forrester⁴¹ have shown that missionaries pioneered in mixing castes, including Dalits, within their schools despite opposition from high caste parents. Setting up a caste free school in a caste dominated society, however, was by no means a simple exercise. Sometimes the schoolmaster had to ask the question whether he was going to have a school at all, if he was to insist on an anti-caste regime. Not surprisingly, many counselled the way of caution. Mountstuart Elphinstone (an enlightened representative of government, it should be noted, and not a missionary) believed that 'if caste is not recognised and tolerated in mission schools none but the pariah would attend and the usefulness of schools as agencies of evangelism would be greatly circumscribed'.⁴² Caste was extremely strong in South India, and the missionary accounts are full of struggles in this area. Pascoe records simply of the SPG Theological College in Madras that 'the original institution founded in 1830, known as Bishop Heber's Seminary, was met by such a manifestation of caste feeling as led to the dismissal of two

⁴⁰ For the Serampore Baptists see Duncan B. Forrester, Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India (London, 1980) pp. 25-8 and for the Scottish missionaries see A.Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1839) p. 616.

⁴¹ See G.A.Oddie, Social Protest in India: British Protestant Missionaries and Social Reform (New Delhi, 1979) and D.Forrester, op. cit.

⁴² Cited in Forrester, Caste and Christianity p.28.

of the first four students.’⁴³ This sounds undramatic - only two people were dismissed after all - but these were trainees for the Christian ministry. Another later instance (1850) - also in Madras - was recorded by Rev A.R.Symonds of the SPG in a letter to headquarters. Referring to Rev Hubbard’s boarding school he stated that ‘the caste children in the Boarding School whom Mr Hubbard has required to eat in the same room with the other children...have been withdrawn [i.e. by the parents]...We are resolved not to yield an inch whatever may be the consequences.’⁴⁴

Historically the missionaries had been somewhat divided in their attitude to caste. Some believed that it was a question of waiting for their converts to become more enlightened, and that the matter would then resolve itself. The majority, however, felt that a stand had to be taken right from the start or the system would be passed on to the next generation.⁴⁵ The SPG tended to take the more rigorist position. In 1847 the Mission determined not to employ those ‘who could not satisfy us that they had utterly renounced caste.’ This included of course those employed as school teachers. A minute of a meeting of the Madras Diocesan Committee of the SPG (15 May 1855) stated that ‘parties in the Mission’s employ, shall be required to eat a meal with the missionary and his family cooked by their ordinary servants, concurring with the Lord Bishop, “that no person should remain in Mission employ who refuses to eat with his Minister”.’ Not all the missionaries agreed with this policy. There was a long dissentient minute, part of which read: ‘Because the proposed measure, having no sanctions which can carry the assent of

⁴³ Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG p. 506.

⁴⁴ Rev A.R.Symonds to E.Hawkins, 9 July 1850 (USPG D.4(A).29).

⁴⁵ See the perceptive letter written by Bishop Heber in 1826 to C.W.Williams Wynn cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 109.

the conscience, being a mere "ordinance after the commandments of men" compelling Christian men, under pains and penalties, to eat in a manner contrary to their natural prejudices, is an unwarrantable infringement of their Christian liberty.' ⁴⁶

The debate continued. The actual trouble which produced these minutes and counter-minutes centred on the Tanjore District. One of the dissentients, Richards by name, claimed that caste tests had virtually closed the Tanjore Boarding School. George Heyne, the Secretary of the Tanjore Local Committee of the SPG, protested that there was more to the story than met the eye. His version ran as follows:

The facts of the case are these. Some years ago the female caste children of the Tanjore Boarding School ran away in a body because a girl of no-caste merely went into the school cook-room on one occasion. Mr Pope then dismissed all the children whose parents approved of this act. He then resolved henceforth to confine the boarding school to its legitimate intention of an 'orphan house' and to admit none into it but orphans and children of the really poor and necessitous. He also resolved to allow no distinction of caste whatever. The result is that there are now 15 boys and 21 girls (of so-called low-caste parents) in the boarding school, and this number could be doubled and trebled if to increase numbers were an object. Most of the children then withdrawn are now in school as day scholars paying for their schooling, and for their books, instead of being fed and clothed as paupers, by the Mission.

Heyne continued that he was not surprised that caste people did not seek to enter the

⁴⁶ Minutes of a meeting of the Madras Diocesan Committee of the SPG, 12 November 1855 (USPG D5(A).29).

school because they had a nearby alternative (run by one of the dissentients, Hubbard) 'in which children of parents well able to support them are fed, clothed, taught and provided with books for nothing, while tho' they have with difficulty been brought to eat in one room, the caste children do so quite apart from the lower caste children, their food being prepared by one of their own caste.' ⁴⁷

There is an instructive dynamic here. Heyne would have been happy enough to have included 'caste people' in his school but the mission's principled stand on the caste issue meant that the school had to be filled with 'orphans and children of the really poor and necessitous'. Yet it was to educate such that the school had originally been set up, and in terms of forming Christian communities it was these schools which had provided the missionaries with a pattern of success. The missionaries, however, found it difficult to resist the understandable desire to include those of the more respectable, influential and wealthy classes.

In fact the caste issue probably did more damage to the school system in Tanjore than Heyne admitted or at least than he anticipated. A letter in the following year (1856) from J.A.Regel (also on the Tanjore Local Committee) to the Bishop of Madras recorded the resignation or dismissal of many of the Society's employees in Tanjore (he reckoned 37 out of 73) and he admitted that this had naturally affected the school work. 'This of course necessitated the temporary closing of some of our schools, and several villages which decline to receive any catechist not a caste man, are left without a catechist.' ⁴⁸ In general, however, Regel was well pleased, he said, with the way things were going. If he

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

⁴⁸ J.A.Regal to Bishop of Madras, no date (USPG: D.5(A).29).

had some misgivings he kept them to himself for the time being. A year later in a letter to the parent committee in Madras he admitted that he had 'some misgivings as to the expediency of admitting pupils of the lower caste amongst such respectable boys as his'.⁴⁹ If this seems like a volte face it was probably not. Regel's objection had to do with class rather than caste - a very different matter as far as Victorian missionaries were concerned.

Caste was a subject which affected all of the missionaries and the educational missionaries in quite specific ways. To be fair to them it was one of the areas where they were often prepared to take a stand against the perceived wisdom of the imperial culture. According to Geoffrey Moorhouse by the late nineteenth century the so-called Warrant of Precedence - which began by recognising 'fourteen different levels of status' - had expanded to 'sixty-one, some reserved for one person, others shared by a number of people'.⁵⁰ Moorhouse speculates that the love-hate relationship between British and Indians derived from the complex hierarchical attitudes present in both people. 'Each grasped the other's basic social premise and not only understood it but subconsciously respected it as a curious variant of their own.'⁵¹ From this many of the missionaries dissented. There was a great deal of opposition to caste in missionary circles, and the educational missionaries in particular believed that to them might be bequeathed the very special task of freeing the nation from caste and thereby creating a permanent

⁴⁹ J.A.Regel to Madras Diocesan Committee of the SPG, 12 November 1857 (USPG: D.5(A).29).

⁵⁰ Geoffrey Moorhouse, India Britannica, cited by Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism (London, 1993) p. 103.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 102.

religious change. As late as 1912 an editorial in The Harvest Field by H. Gulliford commended the opinions of W.E.S.Holland published in a forceful paper on 'The Aim of Educational Missions' in the magazine The East and the West. He quoted Holland as saying that 'caste at present is the barrier against which every young man is inevitably brought up', a situation unique to the Indian mission field. He also recorded Holland's anecdote concerning a young man who said to him 'We will fight for caste to the end; for it is our last standing-ground against Christianity. You know quite well that if it was not for caste, three quarters of the men in this hostel would be Christians today.' Gulliford himself commented: 'The educational missionary is doing more than any other to break down the barrier, and when it is broken down, the rush into the Kingdom, as established by Jesus Christ, will be beyond human calculation. Let no worker be weary in well-doing for soon the reaping time shall come.' ⁵²

These were brave words but the cynic might say that the missionaries were always coming up with these 'keys' which only needed turning in the lock for the house of Hinduism and Indian resistance to the gospel to be entered and occupied. Where Holland may have been right was in the first part of his analysis when he suggested that the biggest barrier to the progress of Christianity was probably caste. V. Chakkarai, an Indian Christian associated with the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, writing a year or so later (also in 'The Harvest Field') pointed out that 'abandoning caste entirely still had a fearsome cost attached to it'. ⁵³ The missionaries found that they could to some extent undermine caste practices in their own schools but that scarcely touched the structure of caste in the

⁵² Rev H. Gulliford, editorial in The Harvest Field xxxii/3, March 1912, p.83.

⁵³ See below p.325.

home and therefore in society. Rev G. Hibbert Ware, also from the CMD, commented that the very fact that there were mass movements to Christianity among outcastes and tribals, but not amongst high caste Hindus, was 'God's judgement on caste'.⁵⁴ This was in itself perhaps a subtle way of saying that the war against caste was being lost. But many no doubt believed that it was simply a matter of time. 'Reform' was sure to come. Education would transform the lives of the lowly, especially if caste were broken.

Conclusions

J.Waskom Pickett, still the most important chronicler of the mass movements in India, has recorded that in every one of the mass movements that he studied (ten in all)⁵⁵ schools played a prominent part. 'In some areas...the opening of a school has been become virtually a part of the ritual by which groups in new villages indicate their acceptance of Christianity.' ⁵⁶ Also that the movement itself changed the nature of the educational enterprise. 'Where mission work was started prior to the mass movements the effect of those movements upon the schools was to change the primary emphasis from direct evangelism to the development of the Christian community.' ⁵⁷ In the letters and reports that Pickett examined the

⁵⁴ G.Hibbert-Ware, 'The Place of Education in Missionary Work', Occasional Paper No. 31 of the CMD, 1904 (CMD 129).

⁵⁵ Pickett designated ten areas, but did not claim that this was a complete list. He excluded, for example. the widespread movements to Christianity in Assam (and Burma) and also those in the Tirunelveli District among the Nadars which form part of our evidence about education in the villages. See J.W.Pickett, Christian Mass Movements in India (New York, 1933) pp.14-15.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.274.

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 265.

results that missionaries hoped to achieve through schools were: knowledge of the Bible, development of leaders who would then become pastors and evangelists, and general social amelioration for a poverty stricken people.⁵⁸ In fact a substantial movement of local people towards Christianity altered the educational possibilities in a radical way. All the major aims of missionary education could be achieved at the same time. Conversions could and did continue to take place through the influence of the school and the schoolmaster. The children of Christians received an education through village schools which were linked, for the more able academically, to opportunities in secondary and higher education, and this produced the 'native agency' so much desired, at least in theory, by the missionaries. Meanwhile the whole community enjoyed a degree of social amelioration. Through the schools the missionaries were able to control this process to a remarkable degree. Their usual complaint in these circumstances was not that there was 'opposition' but that there were insufficient helpers to do the work thoroughly, given the 'backwardness' of the people. The Missions placed teacher-catechists, when such men were available, in villages where there were a good number of converts. What the teacher-catechist offered in those villages was generally the government approved primary school curriculum supplemented by religious education. Its purpose was to provide basic literacy skills, and to afford an opportunity for further education in a mission boarding school or training centre to those who did well. The teacher catechist had to struggle against a tradition of Dalit illiteracy, against levels of Dalit poverty which forced even young children to work in the houses and fields, and against an irrelevant curriculum. Nevertheless, there were some impressive individual successes and the rate of literacy among Christian

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.265.

Dalits was far higher than among other Dalits.⁵⁹ However this was a slow process. It was generally not the converts themselves but their children who were able to take advantage of the new job opportunities outside the village which education and Mission connections opened up.⁶⁰ Pickett's chief concern about the educational system was that there was an inadequate rate of transfer of village educated students to the higher opportunities in education elsewhere. Further those that did manage to reach the 'big city' failed to return.⁶¹ Bishop Azariah in his work at Dornakal (after 1912) was so concerned about this trend that he tended to de-emphasize higher education as a result. He closed high schools and Noble College in Masulipatam and diverted the resources into 'trade schools'. He argued that Christian education ought to promote the overall welfare of the villages rather than create an educated elite. His observation that the 'literary' education offered by most Christian schools and colleges tended to encourage successful graduates to leave the village, was no doubt true, but the policy was deeply unpopular with Azariah's Telegu flock.⁶² Later on Henry Whitehead was to suggest 'village universities'.⁶³ Whether this was ever a practicable solution is doubtful.

Given that significant numbers becoming Christians within one community provided the missionaries with a unique opportunity of achieving all their major educational aims, it is

⁵⁹ See above p.271.

⁶⁰ John C.B.Webster, A History of the Dalit Christians in India, (San Francisco, 1992) p.63.

⁶¹ Pickett Christian Mass Movements. p. 290. These developments are also noted by the Lindsay Commission. See below p.428.

⁶² Billington-Harper, 'Azariah and Indian Christianity' pp. 192-4.

⁶³ See below p.431.

surprising perhaps that more was not done to follow up on this successful pattern, and that, as we shall see in chapters 8 and 9, there was always a very substantial commitment to educating children from high caste and well-to-do families.

Some have suggested that this lack of focus vitiated the whole process. James Massey, for example, claims that 'the results of better education and the benefits of the missionary and Christian institutions have been more negative than positive.' This is not a question of cultural imperialism. Rather, 'these educational institutions and systems supported the values more of the oppressors, rather than the oppressed, particularly with regard to the Christian Dalits (outcastes) in India'. According to Massey, Christian Dalits have remained trapped in their 'dalitism', even up to the present, because the pietistic religion to which they were introduced did not encourage them to change their 'worldly' status, because the early Christians [did he mean missionaries?] did not make a stand against caste, and because the superior attitudes of missionaries encouraged similar superior attitudes among upper caste Indians whom they educated.' ⁶⁴

This is no doubt a rather harsh judgement. Massey clearly goes too far, though his comments are typical of what might be called the 'Dalit consciousness' school. The counter argument is that many communities (the Nadars are a classic example) did experience considerable 'social uplift' as a result of new educational opportunities and many missionaries were prepared to take a stand against caste and social oppression. This is the main thrust of Samuel Jayakumar's recent work in this area. ⁶⁵ He

⁶⁴ See James Massey, 'Christian Dalits in India', Religion and Society xxxvii, No 3, September 1990 p. 48ff.

⁶⁵ Samuel Jayakumar, 'A Critical and Comparative Study of the Relationship Between Missionary Strategy, Dalit Consciousness and Socio-economic

contends, with a wealth of evidence, 'that Christian mission did contribute to the awakening of the depressed classes' consciousness which in turn resulted in their socio-economic transformation.'⁶⁶ In effect he accuses the Dalit liberation theologians of forgetting their own history in not taking into account the massive involvement of Christians in education offered by Christian mission that made 'Dalit consciousness' possible.⁶⁷ He also contends that the current growth of Indian Christianity under Indian leadership is 'an evidence that indigenous popular Christianity not only exists but thrives in Indian soil. It has never been the religion of the elite but always the religion of the common people – the Dalits.'⁶⁸ If this is true, and it is admittedly a contentious issue, then those missionaries who directed education to the poor were choosing the right priority in terms of founding a national church.

This sharp debate raises another issue. What was the nature of Christian conversion in the group or mass movements? It is interesting that R.E.Frykenberg links education and conversion.⁶⁹ Frykenberg draws his evidence from the motives and methods of the early Lutheran, Pietist, missionaries in South India, but it is clear that these methods were influential in most missionary education in village

Transformation in the Missionary Work by SPG among the Nadar and Paraya Communities of Tirunelveli District between 1830 and 1930' (Unpublished Ph D. thesis, Open University, 1998).

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.2.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p.320.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.205.

⁶⁹ R.E.Frykenberg, 'The Impact of Conversion and Social Reform upon Society in South India During the Late Company Period: Questions Concerning Hindu-Christian Encounters, with special reference to Tinnevely'. in C.H.Philips and M.D.Wainwright, editors, Indian Society and the Beginnings of Modernisation c. 1830-1850 (London,

situations.⁷⁰ Because the Pietists put so much emphasis on doctrine as integral to conversion it was necessary that every single member of a conversion movement should be taught. A high literacy rate was essential and this applied to non-Christians also, as it helped in the evangelization process. The Bible was deemed essential for the transmission of the faith. This meant that language was 'the Gateway', with successful conversion movements depending on translating, printing and schooling.⁷¹ Conversion then became the starting point of a process which led to increasing education and education in turn led to inner directed self-improvement. It also made possible increasing mobility as employment opportunities outside the village opened up. Mobility led to a new awareness of social disability and injustice.⁷²

Of course this account links conversion and education to a particular sort of social amelioration. Susan Bayly, just to take one example, would disagree with this analysis.⁷³ Bayly accepts the customary view that by the late nineteenth century communities had a greater sense of identity and rightly points out that as a result 'conflicts over rank and status now involved many groups who had once been largely unconcerned with tokens of hierarchy and precedence.' However she will not admit that this is anything to do with a change of ideology, or to do with 'modern'

1976) pp. 187-243.

⁷⁰ Though it has been insufficiently investigated, it seems likely that the Serampore Baptists were influenced by Pietist models. A century later Bishop Azariah is using the same (pietist) educational methods he observed in his youth in Tirunelveli District, in setting up educational institutions in Dornakal diocese.

⁷¹ Frykenberg, 'The Impact of Conversion' pp.197-8.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 204.

⁷³ Susan Bayly, Saints, Goddesses and Kings: Muslims and Christians in South Indian Society (1700-1900) (Cambridge, 1989).

ideas of liberation or social uplift. She claims that for groups new and old their participation in these disputes was 'to enhance their ritual status and honour' and that they 'all accepted the fundamental notions of hierarchy and ceremonial precedence which underlay the system'. As far as conversion to Christianity was concerned it 'merely provided one more set of bargaining counters for these contestants'.⁷⁴ Dick Kooiman agrees. Having studied conversion movements in South Travancore in the nineteenth century, he contends that conversion to Christianity and Sanskritisation are 'closely intertwined'.⁷⁵ I suggest that this is a somewhat reductionist view, which assumes that people change their religion for only one reason and that all those who join in a group conversion have the same reasons. Furthermore, Frykenberg's point is not that conversions took place because of any 'modern' ideas of justice and liberation, but because education and social amelioration were bound up with conversion as part of a 'package'. Also there was development. Those who began with traditional motives – a step up within the caste hierarchy perhaps – may have discovered, as time went by and through continuing education or travel, more 'modern' ways of looking at the world. As Judith Brown says,

Although...sanskritisation and new forms of association were often attempts to change status in the existing hierarchy, signifying acceptance of ritual

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, p. 448.

⁷⁵ Dick Kooiman, Conversion and Social Equality in India : The London Missionary Society in South Travancore in the 19th Century (Amsterdam, 1989) p. 208. Kooiman agrees that education raised the social status of the converts. (*ibid.*, p. 200) His contention is that conversion did not do a great deal to change their religious convictions. He illustrates this from such areas as caste attitudes, marriage customs, and the continuing influence of folk religion. (*ibid.*, pp.168-96).

norms, the differential spread of education and consequent access to prestigious jobs and new political power gradually began to convince some lower castes that they must pursue secular rather than ritual ends; and exploit modern rather than traditional sources for influence.⁷⁶

Brown suggests that the non-Brahmin movements emerged in this context.

Despite the examples of social amelioration provided by Jayakumar, Frykenberg and others the question remains: was Christianity too often seen by the missionaries as a conservative force in terms of social status? Was it designed to meet people's needs, spiritual and physical, but not to challenge existing social, economic and political structures. The classical form of this debate, in terms of education, is the question as to whom education should be primarily directed, the 'classes' or the 'masses', the rich or the poor - typically the upper castes on one hand and the Dalit or lower caste converts on the other.⁷⁷ Of great interest here is the analysis made by Rosalind O'Hanlon of the effect of the Free Church of Scotland schools in the Bombay and Pune area. O'Hanlon refers specifically to the work of Bombay radicals such as Jotirao Phule and Hari Deshmukh⁷⁸ and their educational background. She speaks admiringly of 'the function of the schools and colleges that they [the Radicals] attended...in their assimilation by the individual of ideas of social reform and religious radicalism'. Many things happened: 'the mixing together of social groups, the

⁷⁶ J.Brown, Modern India: the Origins of an Asian Democracy (Oxford, 1994) p.166.

⁷⁷ See J.Ingleby, 'Trickling Down or Shaking the Foundations: Is Contextualisation Neutral?' in Missiology XXV, No 2, April, 1997 pp. 183-7.

⁷⁸ R.O'Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology (Cambridge, 1985) pp. 103-32.

weakening of the traditional ties of the family and their replacement by the bond of common activity and occupation, the higher levels of literacy, the greater awareness of new ideas and new challenges to traditional beliefs, and the increased opportunities for individual mobility through the provision of employment.' In all these areas, according to O'Hanlon, the school community was crucial.⁷⁹ Gopal Hari Deshmukh, described the introduction of educational opportunities as 'a third eye' giving them new models of perception and new ideas and information with which to understand Indian society, and Phule's play 'The Third Eye' attacked the denial of these opportunities to the masses by the Brahmins for their own end.⁸⁰

This certainly means that education is being commended as an egalitarian force. Notice, however, that the Bombay radicals also complained that their social oppressors had used education to reinforce their position. Similarly, Frykenberg, in his study mentioned above, comments on the way that the Hindus of Madras, already the governmental and commercial elite of the presidency on account of their extremely privileged cultural and financial heritage, added to their advantage by their Westernised education.⁸¹ It is worth adding that the British were often seen as the allies of those who wished to break the power of the Brahmins, but not necessarily through their educational work. In the Delhi context for example, the Cambridge missionaries at St Stephen's College were clearly empowering the upper castes. The non-educational Cambridge missionaries such as H.C. Carlyon, who worked outside of Delhi, had a shrewder idea of the opportunities of allying with the anti-Brahmin

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 105-6

⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 123ff.

⁸¹ Frykenberg, 'The Impact of Conversion' p.206.

movement than their colleagues.

You must know that in the villages men of the lower ranks are regularly sent to guard our tents at night, though you pay nothing for it. Here on our enquiring one night who had come, a banya - or petty shopkeeper - replied that the Jat landowners had compelled them to take their turn, but the next night we had some Brahmins who were very irate at the indignity shown to them. When however I mentioned this to a young Jat landowner of another large village where the same thing had happened, he laughingly replied 'We and the English will put the Brahmins down!' ⁸²

Another Cambridge missionary also working in the rural districts near Delhi reproduced the following Jat poem in a report home.

We have thoroughly examined the matter

All religions are a lie

Muhammedan judges and priests

Hindu priests and astrologers

All alike seek their own gain

'Whatever is given here will be repaid'

So they say - and lie.

They who have gone hence

Of them we know nothing

And they who have come hither

⁸² Report by H.C. Carlyon ('Account of the Work, 1885') in Occasional Paper 5 of the CMD (CMD 129).

Tell us nothing.

When this spirit leaves the body

We gain no trace of it ('we obtain neither leaf nor branch')

Hindus and Turks for the sake of salvation

Forge a thousand lies

Saith Kamali, Qabir's daughter

'They who seek, find'.⁸³

Religious issues here clearly tied into the wider debate concerning the rich and the poor. The village Christians rejected the teachings of both Hindus and Muslims because they saw religion itself being the means by which they were exploited and kept poor. Where Christian education 'raised' the poor then one could expect a more positive attitude to religion.

Finally the issue of whether choices had to be made in deciding to whom to offer educational opportunities is one that comes up again in the wider context of 'diffusion' and 'trickle down'. We shall therefore deal with this issue in the next chapter when considering the educational opportunities offered by the missionaries to the more privileged sectors of Indian society.

⁸³ Reproduced by Rev A. Haig, 'Mission Work in the Rohtak District' in Occasional Paper 11 of the CMD, 1887 (CMD 129).

Chapter 8: Higher Education and Diffusion, the Cambridge Mission

We must now turn to the era of 'high imperialism', the last quarter of the nineteenth century and a little beyond, to examine the educational theories and missiological perspectives which belong chiefly to those working in higher education and to those theologians who saw the educational work of missions as chiefly one of 'diffusion'. This term is defined more fully during the course of this chapter, but the basic concept is of a growing Christian influence, probably gradual and unacknowledged, but in due course permeating the thinking of society as a whole.

Most of our evidence will be drawn from the Cambridge Mission to Delhi (CMD). The CMD, also known as the Cambridge Brotherhood, consisted chiefly of educational missionaries. At the heart of their work was St Stephen's School, a secondary school for boys with English as the medium of instruction, and, as time went by, St Stephen's College, an English medium higher education college for young men. The founder of the mission was Edward Bickersteth, though Bickersteth's association with the CMD was quite brief. Behind him was the theologian and Biblical scholar, B.F. Westcott, who was a life-long supporter of the Mission. Westcott had a dream that St Stephen's College would be 'an Alexandria on the banks of the Jumna', by which he implied a centre of education which would do for Hinduism what Clement and Origen had done for Greek thought.¹ The leading figures of the opening years of the Mission were Charles Lefroy (later to become Bishop of the Punjab) and S.S. Allnutt. After the turn of the century the Mission's most illustrious recruit was C.F. Andrews.

¹ K. Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love, Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions 1846-1914 (London, 1995) p. 175.

As to the main purpose of the mission there seems to have been a dual purpose or perhaps even some confusion. The founders claimed initially that the chief thrust of their educational work was 'to bring the greatest number possible of Hindus and Mohammedans into direct contact with Christianity' and this meant a process of education which 'would set the gates of so many hearts at least ajar for the future entrance of the Gospel of Salvation and the word of truth'. This comment belongs to S.S.Allnutt and he was writing to Dr Westcott in 1880.² This was a bold statement in the light of the fact that a pamphlet circulated by the CMD in June 1877, specifically claimed that as far as education was concerned the primary role of the Mission was to be 'especially the education of native Christians'.³ In fact this was not the case and never became the case. The main target for the educational missionaries of the Cambridge Mission throughout was non-Christians. In St Stephen's School itself, the main school for which all the other educational activities acted as feeders, there were 6 Christians, 112 Hindus and 7 Muslims at the time Allnutt was writing.⁴

In Delhi in 1880 there were very few Christians within the Anglican community (though the Baptist community was quite significant) and therefore schools could not, in any case, be expected to flourish on the basis of those converts alone. Later, in 1895, W.S.Kelley in a Cambridge Mission Occasional Paper, looked at the possibility of schools primarily for the children of Christians and rejected it on principle. He admitted that there was a case to be made for them, and cited successful examples,

² Rev S.S.Allnutt to Dr Westcott, 30 June, 1880 (CMD 131).

³ Printed Postscript to the Minutes 1877-82 of the Cambridge Committee of the CMD dated June 1877. Also a pamphlet circulated separately.

⁴ Allnutt to Westcott (CMD 131).

but on the whole felt that 'mixed schools' were best, though with a hundred per cent Christian staff. He used the well known 'hot-house' argument: 'it was thought better not to train up our young Christians in a temperature suited only to exotics, and then suddenly send them forth too often to be nipped by the frost and cold of their life's struggle.' ⁵

The main aim then was contact with the Muslim and Hindu communities, leading ultimately, it was hoped, to conversions. The difficulty was that there were very few conversions. In June 1877 a printed postscript to the Minutes of the Cambridge Committee stated that 'there were last year as many as ninety baptisms'. ⁶ Even allowing for some exaggeration, this was a deceptively encouraging start. By contrast J.W.T.Wright, in a letter to Dr Westcott in 1886, remarked that 'I have not had the pleasure of seeing any boy whose life and character has been changed by accepting the faith of Christ.' He continued however, 'I cannot doubt that the teaching had a real influence on many.' ⁷

Two years later S.S.Allnutt grappled with the same issue. He spoke of

signs of a real advance in the more directly spiritual part of our work...In almost every class there are now one or two students who give indications of being thoroughly in earnest. Such students help to raise the tone in their class, and the old dead level of apathy and indifference is, I believe, gradually disappearing. Of

⁵ Rev W.S.Kelley, 'The Christian Boys' Boarding House', Occasional Paper 23 of the CMD, 1895 (CMD 129).

⁶ Printed postscript to Minutes of 1877-82.

⁷ Rev J.W.T.Wright to Westcott in Eighth Report of the CMD, 1886 (CMD 131).

one or two students we could confidently report that they were 'not far from the kingdom of God'.⁸

He then recounted the stories of two students, one Parsi and one Hindu, who had thought about baptism but who, in the former case had been deterred by family pressure, and in the latter was awaiting, on the advice of the missionaries, the resolution of his wife's attitude.

It seems to me that the utmost care is requisite to prevent our converts from too hastily availing themselves of the power which the law gives them of becoming freed from their wives at the time of their baptism, a step which they are inclined to take when (as in the present case) they have lived very little with them and have not contracted any deep affection for them.⁹

The Hindu 'convert' mentioned here did not in fact ever come to baptism, but reverted to Hinduism as a result of family pressure.¹⁰ In the same report there was a letter from W.S.Kelley which showed the extent to which the missionaries relied on the consolation (whether based on real or imaginary events it is impossible to say) that something was going on all the time within the thinking of the students, that a hidden work was proceeding. Kelley says:

There are indeed many in whose hearts the Word of God and the claims of Christ

⁸ Report by Rev S.S.Allnutt in Tenth Report of the CMD, 1888 (CMD 131).

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Allnutt to the CMD committee in Cambridge, in Thirteenth Report of the CMD, 1891 (CMD 131).

have taken deep root, and who could be said to be 'not far from the kingdom of God'; the Holy Spirit alone can lead them to take the further step of having the courage of their convictions and confessing Christ before men in Holy Baptism.¹¹

Some years later J.W.T. Wright applied the same consolation. 'Our condition must be best described in these words: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth; and should sleep and rise again night and day, and the seed should spring and grow, he knoweth not how".' ¹² A contemporary report simply said 'We still have no conversions to Christianity among the students to record.' All was not lost however '...there are not a few signs that a remarkable work has been done in raising the moral tone of the young men who have enjoyed the teaching and watched the lives of our Missionaries, and in giving them a loftier and purer conception of God, and enabling them to form a truer estimate of Christianity.' ¹³ This acceptance mirrored the patience of the 'founding father', B.F. Westcott. Westcott counselled his Christian audience not to 'look anxiously for large results' for results will answer to 'the wise counsel of God'.¹⁴

We shall look, in due course, more closely at the question of the more indirect influences of Christian education as perceived by the missionaries, but what is clear is that the Cambridge missionaries never entirely lost hope that conversions might take place. In 1900, Wright, by now very much the senior missionary, mentioned the many men that he had met who were referred to as 'one of Duff's converts' and then added 'I would not be

¹¹ Rev W.S. Kelley to CMD in Thirteenth report of the CMD (CMD 131).

¹² Wright to CMD in Sixteenth Report of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 131).

¹³ Part of the Sixteenth Report of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 131).

¹⁴ B.F. Westcott, Christian Aspects of Life, (London, Macmillan, 1897) p. 183.

misunderstood. All the years I have been at this work in Delhi I have never seen one College student "confess the faith of Christ crucified". But he remained confident. 'I am sure too that, especially in the educational world, the seed is growing we know not how. Every now and then we hear things incidentally which perforce make us feel what a stir is working under the surface, of which we can see or hear next to nothing.' ¹⁵

We may pause here to consider the relationship between the Cambridge Mission as it worked out in practice in Delhi and the vision of the 'founding father', B.F. Westcott, in the light of Martin Maw's thesis ¹⁶ that Westcott had a full blown 'fulfilment theology' ¹⁷ and that some of the CMD missionaries – Bickersteth, Lefroy, Allnutt, Andrews – did their best to work it out in practice, but others found it extremely hard. They tended to impose Western models of education, for example, because that was what they were familiar with and nobody had as yet worked through the intellectually demanding task of putting 'fulfilment' into educational practice. For one thing, present educational demands had to be met. 'They should not be consigned to limbo whilst the brotherhood either evolved an "Eastern" school or learnt how to view the world through Oriental eyes.' ¹⁸ As a result they tended to fall back on the only pattern they knew well: the English public school and university. Cricket and physical exercise were introduced and certainly made the brothers

¹⁵ Wright, 'A Plea for Educational Brotherhoods', Occasional Paper 30 of the CMD, 1902 (CMD 129).

¹⁶ See the chapter on 'Westcott and the Cambridge Mission' in Martin Maw, Visions of India: Fulfilment Theology, the Aryan Race Theory & the Work of British Protestant Missionaries in Victorian India (Frankfurt am Main, 1990).

¹⁷ Fulfilment theory here means that it was possible and necessary to re-express the Christian faith in terms of Indian culture and to see the educational process as one that combined the best of East and West and not one that imposed Western cultural patterns on India.

¹⁸ M. Maw, Visions of India p. 196.

feel more at home! Westcott's son Frederick was appalled by the use of such textbooks as Tom Brown's Schooldays and Eothen when he visited St Stephen's College in 1909.¹⁹

In fact the Cambridge Brotherhood simply did not know how to make 'fulfilment theology' work. They were non-plussed by a number of intractable circumstances, not least the nationalist movement, which refused to fit into the idea that as the Logos did its work, and truth was discovered, a unity of truth would emerge. Everybody was happy with the idea that the Church 'must capture the Nationalist movement for Christianity'²⁰ but how was it to be done?

This apparent complacency did not please everybody and critical voices were occasionally heard from within the Mission. In 1896 C. Foxley, reminiscing on his time in India said, with perhaps a greater degree of realism than some of his Cambridge mission colleagues:

One would not have expected a priori to find that, given that these boys [i.e. Hindu and Muslim boys] do come to our schools, few or none of them join the Christian church. It is a revelation of the strength with which in this country the foe is entrenched that they can afford to let us open this excellent posted battery upon them without their security being affected.²¹

Again, at a meeting to commemorate fifty years of SPG work at Delhi and twenty five years of the Cambridge Brotherhood, T. Skelton, an old India hand, was inclined to call a

¹⁹ Delhi Mission News October 1909, p. 152, cited in M.Maw, Visions of India p. 197.

²⁰ As Allnutt himself said: see Delhi Mission News July, 1910, p. 31.

²¹ Rev C.Foxley, 'Reminiscence of Two Years in Delhi', being Occasional Paper 28 of the CMD, 1896 (CMD 129).

spade a spade. He noted that the stream of conversions through educational work had dried up and ascribed this to specific causes: firstly to insufficient knowledge of the religion of the Hindus and Mohammedans, and secondly to the preaching of the Gospel

not as in England by men of the same race, by men on the same level of the hearers, nor, as they would have it preached, by persons of the order of monks, but by the conquering race. It is very hard for the Hindus to divest themselves of the idea that missionaries are not Government agents...All the faults of British administration, all the scandals of European society are set down to Christianity. There is not enough close friendship between missionaries and Hindu. If only the Europeans in general and the missionaries in particular, will make themselves as much like Hindus as they can in all things except their vices, great would be the effect in conciliating people, in facilitating their conversion, and in consolidating the British Empire in India. ²²

Skelton had in mind here the need for what we now call contextualisation, and was not far from Westcott's 'fulfilment' theology.

On the whole the critical voices (and they came primarily from Britain) were not very loud.

The educational missionaries actually involved in the work did not seem greatly

²² Rev T.Skelton, in 'Report of Speeches at Meeting to Commemorate 50 Years of the Society for Propagation of the Gospel at Delhi and 25 Years of the Cambridge Brotherhood', Occasional Paper 30 of the CMD, 1902 (CMD 129) Skelton was beginning to see the light. Looking back it seems amazing that more serious thought was not given to the reasons why there were so few converts. George Thomas has listed the following: (1) the Christianity which educated Indians received was shaped by Graeco-Hebraic metaphysics and philosophy; (2) it took a confessional form which was marked by political and social developments within Europe and North America; (3) it was image bound to colonialism; (4) it was purveyed to them by Christian missionaries who often had dominant and paternalistic attitudes. (George Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1950 (Frankfurt, 1979) p. 65.).

discouraged; they were always ready to push attractive, if somewhat vague, alternative theories. In 1904, G.Hibbert-Ware, the Principal of St Stephen's College, dealing yet once more with the perennial debating topic ('The Place of Education' is the name of his paper) made the bold assertion that 'the issue of "conversions" cannot be judged yet: time will tell.' He adds: 'even apart from the hope of conversions...the work is worth doing and a work which the church ought to do.' A little later on in his discourse, Hibbert-Ware blamed the paucity of conversions on the lack of 'character' in Indian society, 'the fatal divorce between theory and practice'. Thus: 'Any student who became a Christian would be a person of very unusual force of character.' But he was not discouraged. The nearness of so many students to conversion made them seem 'like waves of the sea, each of which, seeming to be about to reach some boundary, recedes, leaving things much as before, save that the great tide itself has risen a little more and come so much nearer to sweeping over the boundary.'²³

Failure to gain converts led to a vicious circle. The CMD ideal - schools and colleges for non Christian boys and men, but staffed by committed Christians - depended on the availability of suitable Christian teachers. Allnutt realised that these would have to be drawn ultimately from the Indian Christian church, rather than from missionaries from overseas, and lamented that more Indian Christians were not coming forward for the task. He had his reasons why they were not available: there was plenty of employment for them outside of Christian work, remuneration was relatively poor for schoolteachers in Christian schools, and even able men were not allowed to rise to positions of responsibility because they were under the control of the local missionary. His response

²³ Rev G, Hibbert-Ware, 'The Place of Education in Missionary Work', Occasional Paper 31 of the CMD, 1904 (CMD 129).

was a Christian Teacher Training College which, though a sensible idea, threw him back to the very solution which the Cambridge Mission had been trying to avoid, namely Christian educational institutions designed primarily for a Christian clientele.²⁴

A.C.Ghose, who was ordained into the Anglican ministry in 1896 and was described by Pascoe (in 1901) as 'the first fruits of the native Church' and 'at present the only native clergyman in the Society's Mission in the Punjab', ²⁵ virtually said, in a passionate piece of writing, that new Indian Christians could not be expected to be interested in religious vocations:

Is it to be wondered at that the educated Indian Christian should be rather loath to devote himself to a purely religious life? Has not secular life on the very face of it infinitely larger attractions for him? Isn't he free enough and educated enough to compete successfully with his rich heathen countrymen? Is it to be wondered at that he likes to become a doctor, a lawyer, a tahsilda, or an extra-assistant-commissioner, in preference to becoming a padre?...Is it any wonder that the rising Indian Christian lads, with new energies in their muscles, new aspirations in their hearts, new and progressive ideas in their heads, and the love of a new and more enlightened standard of living ingrained in their minds, should give little attention to the invitations of missionaries? They would not be human if they did not do that. English education is intensely human and natural if it is anything. It develops the manly and human side of a man...The educated

²⁴ Allnutt, 'The Present Needs of the Christian Education Enterprise in India' Occasional Paper 22 of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 129).

²⁵ C.F.Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG, An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1900, 2 vols (SPG, London, 1901) p. 628 c.

Indian Christian is truly a free and healthy man, and the fact of his being thrown out of the shackles of caste into close contact with Englishmen inspire new ideas and new desires in his mind. Is it to be wondered at that he should try to push on in the race of life and attach only second-rate importance to his religion?

Everybody must admit that there is nothing really mean and low in doing so. It is not enmity against the missionaries that keeps him out of religious work. No doubt he does not aim at the highest; but then the world and his own human possibilities are too much with him.²⁶

Christian education was doing much, according to Ghose, but it was not leading people to religion; not an entirely comforting message for the educational missionaries. However, Ghose offered some comfort in the thought that: '...of all the blessings which Englishmen brought to them Christianity was the best and highest...The sons of the present race of Indian Christians will yet be the religious conquerors of India.'²⁷

Diffusion Theory

The CMD missionaries never really considered changing the chief focus of their work. In terms of practical politics they were not going to abandon the work of St Stephen's College

²⁶ A.C.Ghose, 'Indian Christians, Their Attitude to Missionary Work and Relations with Missionaries', Occasional Paper 24 of the CMD, reprinted in the Panjab Mission News, 15 November, 1895 (CMD 129).

²⁷ After Indian independence in 1947 the missionary force steadily declined in numbers and the task of evangelism has become increasingly the responsibility of the Indian church. Today there are a number of evangelistic agencies, wholly sponsored and financed by them. It might reasonably be claimed, in the circumstances, that Ghose was something of a prophet. Certainly, efforts to educate the children of Christians seem to have, at last, borne fruit in terms of 'raising up a native agency'.

for example, and set up a theological college or a Christian teacher training college instead. On the other hand they seem to have accepted that their work would produce few or no conversions. What then were they hoping to achieve? Other higher education institutions with a largely non-Christian intake faced the same question and for the same reasons. The educational missionaries were not the only ones that were asking these questions, as Rosemary Fitzgerald has pointed out in a recent piece. Those responsible for medical missions often worried over whether in practice medical matters would swamp evangelistic concerns. Certainly medical work dominated the agenda of medical staff and there was little or no time for evangelistic work. Was this 'mere humanitarianism' they wondered. Or did Christian medical work provide a supreme example of the gospel in action? On the whole the latter opinion prevailed, particular as a wider theology of missions and a wider definition of the missionary task became more widespread (as against the 'narrower muscular Christianity' of the earlier years).²⁸ All these arguments were raised with respect to education, and the trajectory of thought was the same. W.J.Elmslie wrote in 1873 that the woman medical missionary was empowered to: 'soften bigotry, remove prejudice, dispel ignorance, drive away gloom, and unobtrusively, but nevertheless effectually, deposit the all-pervading leaven of the Gospel in numberless hearts and homes.' This bears a striking resemblance to the claims we are about to consider for education as a means of gradual 'diffusion' and there is even the use of the familiar illustration, 'leaven', so beloved by the CMD missionaries.²⁹

What became a widely accepted idea was 'diffusion theory', and it would be good to

²⁸ R.Fitzgerald, 'A "Peculiar and Exceptional Measure": The Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India in the Later Nineteenth Century' in R.Bickers and R.Seton eds., Missionary Encounters: Sources and Issues (Richmond, 1996) p. 194.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.186.

review, at this point, what precisely was meant by this term. At one level this meant little more than the spread of Christian influence through social networks. A description by Bishop Caldwell of the growth of Christianity as a result of educational work in Alvar Turunagiri (in Tamil Nadu) provides an example.

So far as I can discover the origin of the movement [the growth of Christianity], it has taken rise in the SPG Anglo-Vernacular School. The school has a good headmaster who has influenced the young men and boys who have in turn influenced their parents, many of whom are leaders in the Community. These men have influenced the temple managers, the Brahmans, and the community generally. Thus wave after wave of influence seems to have emanated from the school.³⁰

Yet the full blown diffusion theory was rather more sophisticated than this and referred rather to stages in the process of Christianising a community or nation. The roots of this idea can be traced to a relatively early period. There had been elements of it in the thinking of the earlier educational missionaries, especially the Scottish ones. As has already been described in some detail, the victory of the 'Moderate' party in Scotland which largely carried the day in the debate over 'civilising' and 'christianising', and the success in India of their surprising representative, Alexander Duff (surprising because he came from an 'Evangelical' background) paved the way for diffusion theory.³¹ However, the CMD missionaries belonged to a time when the diffusion theory was being formulated in a way that gave the missionary community a

³⁰ Bishop R. Caldwell, Evangelistic Work among the Higher Classes and Castes in Tinnevely extracted from Caldwell's fourth Journal, 1877, and published separately, pp. 9, 10.

³¹ See Chapter 3: Themes and Trends, especially pp. 87-8.

clear mandate. This was partly due to the on-going influence of Scottish missionary ideas. A key figure, for example, in developing diffusion theory in India was William Miller and we shall see below how Miller's thought was connected to and a development of Duff's.

At a Missionary Conference at Allahabad in 1872 Miller specifically addressed the failure of the evangelistic emphasis. While admitting that 'the additions made to the visible church by means of these Institutions [Christian schools and colleges] are fewer than they once were' he still began his response by stating his grand design as: 'to bring INDIA to Christ'. He added that if mission was thought of simply as bringing as many people as possible under the gospel then India should be abandoned altogether, because of the difficulty of making converts, compared to other nations. So we cannot, he said, judge simply by results. Miller's illustration was an army. The aim was not only to kill and capture as many of the enemy as possible but also to drive the enemy back and to deliver the country. So a patient strategy was needed.

Miller made a cleverly worded general appeal: 'other things being equal, the condition of a nation or community is far more hopeful when its youth...have their intellects trained, their feelings directed, their characters formed under Christian influence, than when they grow up under influences leading them away from God and truth.' He then said, more controversially, that he believed that the above, i.e. youth having their intellects trained and so on, was 'THE service the Educational Institutions are fitted to render and the only service that the church has a right to expect from them.' (emphasis Miller's)

Miller further argued that attempting to set up an educational institution in order, as a

first priority, to win conversions was neglecting God's way for our own.³² Conversions came by preaching. Miller used the illustration of ploughing, sowing, and reaping. If everything were ready for reaping, then by all means get down to that job. What if, however, the appropriate task was preparatory work. Attracting people to schools in order that they might be preached at was dishonest, and would forfeit God's blessing. 'That blessing is for those who do with a whole heart the work they profess to undertake. The work professed in this case is the work of education.' Miller even added that the number of converts obtained by the educational institution was irrelevant.³³ Miller was not of course saying that there was no such thing as Christian education. Another part of his argument in the same address was to make a plea for a more all-round educational method, which developed the student in intellect, conscience and spirit. He was worried about the way that so-called Christian education was proceeding in India, particularly in its relation to government regulations. He said: 'unless these Institutions [Christian schools and colleges] can keep with tolerable steadiness before the minds of their alumni that life has higher aims than that of passing examinations - unless they can awaken and

³² The Lindsay Report (1931) also condemned this idea - using education as a 'bait' - calling it 'opportunity theory', and it maintained that on the whole it was not how the missionaries had proceeded. Rather 'from the first [they have] been concerned with the welfare of Indian higher education, have played a large part in directing it, have given and are giving unstinted service to it, for its own sake.' (Emphasis mine) In any case where there had been an element of opportunism, this has gone hand in hand with high standards, because 'men cannot go on doing bad educational work because it gives them good Christian opportunities.' Nevertheless care was needed. There must not be duality of purpose. The students should approve 'both the ends and the means.' (The Lindsay Report is cited to this effect in G.Anderson and H.Whitehead, Christian Education in India, (London, 1932) p. 31).

³³ A similar sentiment was expressed by Dr Vincent of the SPCK as early as the end of the eighteenth century 'If the natives understand it [the Christian school] as an institution for teaching the language [English] only, never break their confidence by seeking for converts here. Our religion is not to be advanced insidiously, but proposed boldly, and the first moral principle is good faith.' (Cited in S.K.Mitra, 'Education and the Missionaries in the Presidency of Madras', Indian Church History Review vol 5 no. 2, December, 1971).

cultivate to some fair extent feelings, conscience, soul, as well as intellect and memory, one sees not of what use they are to be in the evolution of the divine plan.' ³⁴

Miller's thinking here reveals a debt to Alexander Duff, a link which has recently been examined by Gerald Studdert-Kennedy. In Studdert-Kennedy's words: 'Duff's educational strategy was based on a powerful cultural assumption: the rational coherence of all branches of Western knowledge as reflections of a material universe informed by ethical premises, themselves fundamentally revealed through scripture.' William Miller inherited this approach, though from a standpoint that was much less critical of Hinduism. He was able to join together a strategy of 'Christian' education with 'the irenic, non-exclusivist impulse in post-Disruption churchmanship' which distinguished his position from Duff's.³⁵ We may also note Ian Maxwell's contention that as a result of rational Calvinism 'the radical and pessimistic Calvinist doctrine of sin was displaced by a much greater confidence in the potentialities of reason-led progress. The notion of "the elect and of the church invisible until the eschaton" was displaced by providentialism whose optimistic sensibilities were much more attuned to the empirical processes of history and the future which those processes necessarily implied.' ³⁶ Furthermore, Miller was a typical late-nineteenth-century idealist, influenced by Edward Caird and the

³⁴ William Miller, extract from Report of the General Missionary Conference, Allahabad, London, 1872-3 p. 103ff.

³⁵ G.Studdert-Kennedy, The 'Colonial Transaction' of Missionary Education: Christ, History and Shakespeare at the Madras Christian College, 1860-1940 (North Atlantic Missiology Project, Cambridge, 1997) pp. 5-6,9.

³⁶ I.Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta' unpublished Ph D thesis for the University of Edinburgh (1995) p. 220.

philosophy of T.H. Green, ³⁷ and on this basis too, he could recommend Christian education as part of God's 'providential' dealing with India.

Responses to William Miller

As an initial reflection on Miller's remarks it is worth noting J.W.T.Wright's lament about the examination system, and the tendency to rote learning that it encouraged. 'Most of the boys, or at least many, are suffering from the disease of cram,' he said. 'I often wish I could make them forget that there are such things as examinations.'³⁸ This may seem no more than a schoolmaster's typical annoyance at the way that examinations seem to dominate the educational process. In this brief comment, however, we see something of the dilemma of missionary education in India. Wright and his colleagues, like Miller, rightly had a view of education that entailed much more than simply passing examinations. It was a view that included as an important or even essential ingredient, some sort of education in the Christian faith. Yet the students had, it seems likely, some other more specific aims, the attainment of the necessary qualifications for a particular station in life. In this they were urged on by their families who had probably made considerable sacrifices to secure them their educational opportunities in the first place. Wright saw the harmful effects of educator and educated sharing two different educational aims. Yet it was a confusion of aims which threatened the whole missionary educational enterprise, at least among the higher castes. In the very same report Wright went on to speak about what he called the 'religious teaching' in the College. He said, 'In religious teaching I am afraid my experience is not a very hopeful one. Stolid indifference,

³⁷ G.Studdert-Kennedy, The Colonial Transaction pp. 8-9.

³⁸ Wright to Westcott in Eighth Report of the CMD, 1886 (CMD 131).

I should say, is the commonest characteristic, now and then developing into positive antagonism.' The religious teaching was clearly a price exacted from the students which they were willing to pay in order to secure other benefits. But it was wishful thinking to expect them to enjoy 'paying up', and indifference verging on antagonism was a not unnatural result of the whole process.

John Wilson of Bombay was at the Allahabad Conference and he responded to Miller's paper ³⁹ by accepting the 'diffusion' theory, or as he put it more particularly, that the educational work should be thought of as preparatory. But he still thought that immediate results (i.e. conversions) could be expected. Wilson had had more success than most in obtaining conversions through the educational institutions in Bombay, and perhaps that influenced his remarks.

Another respondent, J.Barton of the CMS, suggested that what Miller was advocating was not necessarily new; in fact that it had been in the mind of Alexander Duff forty years previously. Duff, Barton believed, had 'three great aims'. Firstly, 'the direct personal conversion of the students themselves'. Secondly, 'the raising up of an educated native ministry', and thirdly 'the general diffusion of Christian light and knowledge throughout the upper classes of the native community'. ⁴⁰ He felt that the first two had not worked out very well, but that the third would be best carried forward by concentrating on a few well-manned institutions which could exercise an influence on the system as a whole.

³⁹ John Wilson, extract from Report of the General Missionary Conference, Allahabad, 1872-3, (London), p. 123ff.

⁴⁰ John Barton, *ibid.*, pp. 130-1.

Wide support for diffusion theory

The support that Miller received at the Allahabad Conference may have meant that his ideas were already being widely canvassed amongst the educational missionaries. Miller, in other words, was more the spokesman than the pioneer. Indeed, it is probable that by Miller's time the diffusion theory was already being developed in two different ways. Firstly it simply meant that, by means of education, the lot of the people would improve. Missionary apologists often adopted an 'even if' argument. Even if there were not conversions, educating the natives was worthwhile in itself. Benjamin Barley insisted:

We are anxious for diffusion of knowledge generally, and shall be glad to do all in our power for the amelioration of the temporal and everlasting condition of all castes of the Natives. While we are primarily affected by their ultimate good, into which the Christian religion introduces its disciples, we are not ignorant or careless of the innumerable temporal blessings which accompany it and are anxious to behold that improved state of society which Christianity never fails of producing. ⁴¹

Secondly, the diffusion theory continued to be characterised as a preparation for the gospel. W.S. Kelley of the Cambridge Mission, writing in the 13th Report (1891), contrasted the attentiveness to the truth and truthfulness of the boys who had come up through the Mission system with the attitudes of the late transfers from the government schools. With regard to the attentiveness to the truth he described how

We always devote the first three-quarters of an hour every day to Scripture

⁴¹ See Mitra, 'Education and the Missionaries in the Presidency of Madras' p. 119.

teaching (the Old Testament and New Testament on alternate days)...and it is during this period of teaching that I have noticed the change from laissez-faire attitude of indifference...into a real desire to know more of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to understand more of the claims which devotion to that life lays upon us.

This seems a contrast to the testimony of J.W.T.Wright above, but Kelley was prepared to speak up for his students in the matter of truthfulness. He praised

their quickened sense of the need of truth, both in word and in deed; in this they get no help for their own system of religion, rather the reverse, and consequently their sense is blunt in the extreme at first, and the only sin in their opinion consists in being found out. But as time goes on their ideas on this point change considerably, and we take the word of our elder students without any scruple, and hardly ever find our trust misplaced.

Finally we can quote Kelley again, in a comment which summarises the attitude of most of the Cambridge missionaries: 'There are indeed many in whose hearts the Word of God and the claims of Christ have taken deep root and who could be said to be 'not far from the kingdom of God'; the Holy Spirit alone can lead them to take the further step of having the courage of their convictions and confessing Christ before men in Holy Baptism.'⁴²

⁴² Kelley to headquarters, part of Thirteenth Report of the CMD, 1891 (CMD 131).

Optimism

As we have seen, the Cambridge missionaries were honest people. They did not make inflated claims; they tried very hard to describe the situation as it was. They were quite candid about their lack of success.

We cannot as yet, I am sorry to say, point to any outward evidence of the good done [in the Poor Boys' Schools attached to the Mission], as the boys after leaving the schools too often drift away and fail entirely to keep up the little learning they had acquired.

But while they were honest, they were also amazingly optimistic - in a vague sort of way.

Still I cannot help feeling that we are little by little spreading the knowledge of the chief facts of the Bible and giving a better tone to the life of the rising generation. In some of the districts many of the elder boys come to our weekday services and as they have no - or scarcely any - religious ceremonies themselves, the more devout must get gradually attached to Christianity.⁴³

They relied heavily on the conviction that the work of diffusion must necessarily be a slow one. Charles Lefroy wrote of his conviction

that foundations are being laid deeply and surely, that such a work as we have in hand must, if it is to be done in any adequate way at all, be a slow one, and that by this slow and steady work a mass of material is being prepared which will,

⁴³ Rev H.C. Carlyon in Fifteenth Report of the CMD, 1893 (CMD 131).

when once the Divine spark touches it, quickly burst into flame and produce a movement towards Christ of a solidity, permanence and depth proportioned to the length of time which has been spent in preparing for it.⁴⁴

Was this all simple self deception? It is difficult to say. It was certainly very convenient for those who were defending the method that gradualism did indeed proceed gradually. The cynical might say that the missionaries had heeded the good advice offered to those who wish to predict the end of the world: to select a date which is beyond their likely life span.

In justifying gradualism the Cambridge missionaries often spoke as if the preparation for the gospel was almost as good as the gospel itself. In the 16th Report of the CMD (1894) while again candidly admitting the lack of converts the author of the report made the usual defence of the educational method: it was 'enabling them (the non-Christian students) to form a truer estimate of Christianity.'⁴⁵ 'Enabling them to form a truer estimate of Christianity' was a vaguely evangelistic purpose, but in practice the aim of conversion had been dropped. Where there was a continuing optimism it did seem to be sometimes a 'grasping of straws', a reliance on wishful thinking and anecdotal evidence. S.S.Allnutt recorded hearing a CMS missionary recount the following hopeful episode at a meeting at Dharmtullah: 'A member of the civil service while riding along the road was overtaken by a rais (native gentleman) who accosted him and said, "Tell your Missionaries not to despair. There is something taking place they know nothing about. The whole ground is undermined, and sooner than they expect all will become Christians".'⁴⁶ This

⁴⁴ Rev G.A.Lefroy, letter in *ibid*.

⁴⁵ Sixteenth Report of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 131).

⁴⁶ Allnutt, 'India's Religious Needs', Occasional Paper 13 of the CMD, 1888 (CMD

was a typical piece of missionary lore, but what is so striking is that a man of the intelligence and experience of Allnutt should latch onto it as if it were deeply significant. Allnutt, of course, like so many of the missionaries, heard what he wanted to hear, and no doubt there were plenty of people about who understood this principle and were ready to oblige. In any case the little phrase 'the whole ground is undermined' is reminiscent of Duff's belief that it would be possible by Christian education 'to set a mine' that would destroy Hinduism.⁴⁷

Another optimistic variation on the *preparatio evangelica* theme was played by Kelley, writing in 1889. He felt that there was a revival in waiting. Christian education 'is having the effect of removing the old landmarks and is shaking the old religious beliefs.' All that was now required was a trigger. 'It only needs that two or three leading spirits should come forward for Baptism, to cause a wave of change to come over the feelings and lives of the youth of Delhi.'⁴⁸ Six years later Kelley seemed less confident. In the light of the 'superstition and ignorance...positive wickedness and vice' of the 'heathen' home it would take a long time before 'Christianity gets into the blood'⁴⁹ - whatever that means.

The Cambridge missionaries became habitual exponents of gradualism which could issue in triumphalistic rhetoric. Here is J.W.T. Wright again:

I am sure too that, perhaps especially in the educational world, the seed is growing

129).

⁴⁷ G. Smith, *The Life of Alexander Duff* 2 vols, (London, 1879) vol 1 p. 109.

⁴⁸ Kelley, 'My First Two Years in Delhi', Occasional Paper 14 of the CMD, 1889 (CMD 129).

⁴⁹ Kelley, 'The Christian Boys...'.

we know not how. Every now and again we hear things incidentally which perforce make us feel what a stir is working under the surface, of which we can see or know next to nothing.⁵⁰

He pinned his faith on the gradual work of people 'drawing nearer and nearer' and remembered those who 'have been cleansed from various forms of moral leprosy who have not yet 'returned to give glory to God'.' He reasserted, 'We shall bring the Gospel of the kingdom - the one kingdom - to the many people of India'.

J.H.Crowfoot, himself a missionary in Delhi from 1867 to 1871, joined in the celebrations to commemorate 50 years of the S.P.G. in Delhi and 25 years of the Cambridge Brotherhood in the same city by a speech which likened the work of the educational missionaries, or more accurately their pupils, to that of John the Baptist. Thus:

Those working in St Stephen's College are able to throw the salt of true religion into the very head of the springs of the intellectual life of the South Punjab. Their pupils will go far and wide as teachers...wherever they go, all unconsciously to themselves, they will be levelling mountains, filling valleys, casting up a highway, in the hearts of those whom they teach, for the coming of the Lord.' ⁵¹

The St Stephen's Principal, Hibbert-Ware, came out with the vague statement: 'Men think and act individually and even in masses differently from what they did. And the change

⁵⁰ Wright, 'A Plea for Educational...'

⁵¹ Crowfoot, Report of Speeches...

has been in a Christian direction.' ⁵²

There were sterner critics such as V. Chakkarai, whom we have already noted as casting doubt on the likelihood of conversions through the schools and colleges. He also attacked the diffusion theory. He was not convinced that the religious education imparted in Christian schools was 'likely to produce any lasting and useful results upon the imagination of the students'. When the student left school or college his struggles to survive in decent employment tended to 'efface whatever slight impression he may have received' i.e. of Christian teaching. 'Again, the lynx-eyed orthodoxy of his caste completes the work with almost mechanical precision and pitilessness.' He wondered whether the purpose of the education was not primarily to 'dissipate prejudices' e.g. the caste system. He agreed that education had had some effect on the caste system 'but this has not promoted any advance towards Christianity'. The true radicals tended to go for neo-Hindu religious movements or perhaps for theosophy. For the rest, abandoning caste entirely still had a fearsome cost attached to it. Hindu mythology might seem bare, but the educated Hindu had learnt to distinguish philosophic Hinduism from 'Puranic admixtures'; also to see that there was a similar admixture (in their view) in Christianity. The final phrase which he took up was 'the slow-leavening influence of Christianity' a phrase beloved of the gradualists. He agreed that something was happening, but felt that the end of the process was more likely to be the accepting of Christian values without Christ, who would at best be 'assigned a leading place in the Hindu pantheon'. ⁵³

⁵² Hibbert-Ware, 'The Place of Education...'

⁵³ V. Chakkarai, 'The Educated Hindu and Christianity' in The Harvest Field xxxiii/12, December 1913, pp. 452-8.

Chakkarai's viewpoint was not typical. Allnutt represented more faithfully the views of the Cambridge missionaries. 'The real reason why so many English laymen refuse to subscribe to our work...is that they cherish a strong dislike to the educated Indian - the Babu as they term him.' He continued: 'We who have found the educated native, when treated with respect and affection, a loveable creature enough, and number many real friends amongst them, may admit the dross in his composition.' But, said Allnutt, that was 'just the point ... there is no such effectual means of purifying away the dross and bringing out the innate good qualities he possesses as that of high-class (in both senses of the word) Christian Education'. He buttressed this with another general statement:

The function of our educational system is twofold: first, to be a direct evangelising agency and ... to aim at breaking up the soil, sowing the seed, and preparing the way for the spiritual harvest which many competent observers among the civilians believe to be far nearer than either we Missionaries or our critics seem to recognise: and secondly to be a refining, elevating influence, sending out young men into the various fields of employment with higher ideas of right and duty than it is perhaps possible for them to assimilate without such influence.

Allnutt concluded with the 'imparting of culture' argument. He accepted the idea 'that experience teaches us that Christianity has only made a firm and living progress where from the first it has brought with it the seeds of all human culture'. Precisely those Missions had had the most real success in which

the Catholic programme that Christ came to redeem not only all men but the

whole of man, body, mind and spirit, has been from the first recognised and acted upon...If we want the Gospel to make firm and living progress in India, we must resolve to neglect no method of imparting to it the highest culture we possess as an integral part of the glorious heritage we have received, and education, when permeated and energised by the Spirit of Christ, has, I believe, in a pre-eminent degree the 'promise of potency' of imparting that culture, however gradual may be the process by which it is developed.⁵⁴

Fulfilment

The idea of diffusion became easier to accept when it was allied to the idea of 'fulfilment'.⁵⁵ If it was possible to reduce the sharp antagonism between Christianity and Hinduism and to see the former as a higher religion to which the latter pointed, then perhaps it was also possible to believe that this was the process which was taking place as the gospel was diffused throughout Indian culture and society.

Certainly, without there being any ordered progression of thought, the missionaries, on the whole, did in fact move from a 'root and branch' approach to Hinduism, characteristic of, say, Alexander Duff to a more sympathetic attitude. In general, the experience by Westerners of cultures other than their own undermined their confidence in a hitherto unchallenged ethnocentricity, and the missionaries had no immunity from this process. Acquaintance with India and its culture led to a greater appreciation of Hinduism which

⁵⁴ Allnutt, 'The Present Needs...'.

⁵⁵ Fulfilment theology here means that it was possible and necessary to re-express the Christian faith in terms of Indian culture and to see the educational process as one that combined the best of East and West and not one that imposed Western cultural patterns on India.

in turn led to an exploration of the idea that within Hinduism lay truths which could be built upon in presenting the Gospel.⁵⁶

This went a good deal further in some cases than a sort of 'know your enemy' tactic. John Wilson of Bombay speaking at the Allahabad Conference of 1872-3 on 'Preaching to Hindus' enjoined the study of native customs and creeds, an area in which he had considerable expertise. What he said was strangely ambiguous however, and this may have reflected the difficulty widely felt about responding to Hinduism at the time. To begin with he protested that he was not advising a close acquaintance with Hinduism so that, like the Alexandrine Fathers 'you may seek to reconcile Christianity with the Oriental philosophy' and not like 'Beschio and Robertus de Nobilibus (sic), that you may seek to reconcile the doctrine of the Bible with those of the Vedas' but rather that the differences should be clearly revealed - the differences between 'the law of the Lord and the law of the priest.' That sounded clear enough but Wilson then went on to say:

Not that you may form a jumble or mixture of true religion and heathenism but that using aright the test of truth, you may discover the ingredients of a pure patriarchal faith to which you may appeal, and on which like Paul at Athens...you may commence your discourse...with something like an appeal to admitted principles - such as are still to be found in the compounds of heathenism, and capable of being so separated from it, as to give you an opportunity of directing to

⁵⁶ Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love includes a number (indeed they form the majority of his examples) of Indian missionaries who were involved in 'diffusion' plus 'fulfilment' type thinking. They are: T.E.Slater, Robert Hume, John Jones, Bernard Lucas, J.N.Farquhar and C.F.Andrews.

the great source, from which they have been derived. ⁵⁷

Even within the one address it seems that Wilson shifted from an approach to Hinduism which largely consisted on the one hand of understanding why it was wrong, and on the other hand knowing about it so that a mutually acceptable foundation might be laid as a basis for further exploration. The following is fairly typical:

While divine truth must be propagated with unwavering fidelity, and all hopes of its ultimate success rest on its own potency, its suitableness to the general character of man, and the assistance of divine grace, judgement ought to be employed in the mode of its application to those who vary much in their creeds and differ much in moral practice...The more a knowledge of Hindooism and of Hindoo literature is possessed by any teacher, the more patiently and uninterruptedly will he be listened to by the people, and the more forcibly will he be enabled, and principally by contrast and concession, to set forth the authority and excellence of the doctrines of Christianity. ⁵⁸

There was a similar ambiguity in the approach of the well known Indologist, Monier Monier-Williams, also an evangelical Christian. In Modern India and the Indians he wrote: 'It must be admitted that the flashes of light which emerge from the mist of pantheism in the writings of the Indian philosophers, must spring from the same light as the Gospel itself.' ⁵⁹ However in his book The Holy Bible and the Sacred Books of the East published

⁵⁷ See Wilson's contribution in Report of the General Missionary Conference held at Allahabad 1872-3 (Madras, 1873).

⁵⁸ G.Smith, The Life of John Wilson (London, 1878) p.320.

⁵⁹ M. Monier-Williams, Modern India and the Indians (London, 1878) p. 190.

just nine years later he changed his mind and rejected this idea entirely.⁶⁰

There seems no doubt that despite these disclaimers many of the missionaries were softening in their attitude to Hinduism as such. Fulfilment theory itself, with its notion that the good in every civilisation was a preparation for the gospel, contributed to this trend. William Miller was a leader in this respect also.⁶¹ We have already seen that Miller stood for the idea of education as primarily for the diffusion of Christian knowledge through Christian education, and his attitude to Hinduism went hand in hand with this. In speaking about Scripture teaching, for example, he advocated a method which intended to 'awaken thought rather than inculcate dogma' and linked this with the claim that in his teaching (or perhaps in the teaching given at Madras Christian College) 'full recognition has been given to all that is good and true in every system of belief, and any cleaving (sic) has been welcome to the gleams of light that, apart from Christianity, have shone across the darkness of the world.' He claimed to be one among those who 'have faith in the might of the truth, and in the Spirit's promised presence.' Miller's idealist framework, already noted, is clearly in evidence here.⁶²

T.E.Slater, who was appointed in 1871 by the LMS to follow up ex-students of Christian institutions in Madras, because of the few number of conversions, also took a notably irenical approach to Hinduism. In the introduction to his book 'God Revealed' ⁶³ he

⁶⁰ M.Monier-Williams, The Holy Bible and the Sacred Books of the East, (London, 1887).

⁶¹ See E.Sharpe, Not to Destroy but to Fulfil: the Contribution of J.N.Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914 (Uppsala, 1965) pp. 82-8.

⁶² . Speech by William Miller in the Second Decennial Conference in Calcutta 1882-3 cited by M. Kuraikose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 235.

⁶³ Details in Sharpe, Not to Destroy p. 98.

actually used the phrase 'not antagonism but consummation' about the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism. He married this with a plea for a 'diffusion' approach rather than conversions. As he put it: 'In the minds of many the simple preaching of the Gospel - "teaching the poor ignorant heathen" the elements of Christian truth - has summed up the duty of the missionary.' This simple preaching affected only one class in the community. It touched 'the mind of any nation only at the point of its weakest and most ignorant individuals'. Slater wanted to set before Western Christians the 'high vocation of the missionary to give to a foreign race a Christian civilisation'. This would be done through permeating 'the national mind with Christian ideas'. 'Hence every open avenue into a nation's life must be entered, every available agency employed, so that points of contact between Christianity and the mind of the people may be multiplied.' 'Every friend of culture should be a friend of mission.'⁶⁴ His later book 'The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity' (Second edition, 1903) was specifically about the competition between Christianity and Hinduism for the allegiance of the educated classes in India, and laid out again a clear fulfilment theory. Slater was particularly concerned about attitudes. Christians must show justice, courtesy and love, and if possible knowledge, in their dealings with Hindus.

G.A.Lefroy of the Cambridge Mission was another exponent of the fulfilment theory, though in his case it was linked with a sort of 'high imperialism'.

We owe it to our deepest convictions...to strive to place ourselves in a more sympathetic attitude and to claim to be...the interpreters and fulfillers of all the

⁶⁴ T.E.Slater, The Philosophy of Missions: A Present Day Plea (London, 1882) cited by Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love pp. 16-18.

past history of the world, more especially of all the blind cravings and feelings after God on the part of man which form the deepest, most abiding part of that history...this is a special feature of our time...the very widening of our commerce and our national relations with the enormous growth of our empire has necessarily tended to break down the narrowness and isolation from which we regard all outside ourselves with doubt and suspicion.⁶⁵

The Cambridge missionaries understood the idea that the propagation of the truth must necessarily be on the basis of truth already received - they had been schooled in this idea by B.F.Westcott - and that this was a particularly important truth for educators. Edward Bickersteth, the founder of the mission in India, often reverted to this theme. At a London meeting of the CMD in 1885, he acknowledged that:

'Almost of necessity those who engage in it (Christian education among the higher classes) recognise and give full weight to all that is true in the systems of the pupils whom they teach, and so carry on their work on the true missionary principle, the principle which makes the truth already held the starting point for further instruction.'⁶⁶

S.S.Allnutt was Bickersteth's faithful disciple. 'It is the duty of Christ's church to "fill the breach" according to Christ's words "not to destroy but to fulfil".' He quoted Phillips Brooks, 'the inherent genius of (the Church's) character has always brought it back to the

⁶⁵ G.A.Lefroy's Ramsden Sermon at Cambridge, 'Christ the Goal of India' in Occasional Paper 15 of the CMD, 1889 (CMD 129).

⁶⁶ E.H.Bickersteth at the London meetings of the CMD, 22 June, 1885. The address was published in Occasional Paper 33 of the CMD, 1910 (CMD 129).

idea that it was not directly to fight with and destroy the other religions of the world, but to satisfy the longings which those faiths expressed.' After identifying this with the church's mission Allnutt added: 'there is no part of that work which gives such scope for the application of the principle...as that of Christian education.'⁶⁷

C.F.Andrews, of the same mission, also had an educational point to make, as he contemplated the relationship between Christianity and Hindu thought. He said, in a correspondence with Bishop Lefroy in 1910: 'The most solid advance ...in the science of education in modern times has been the realisation of the fact that the teacher must start from the pupil's standpoint, not his own'. This in itself is an interesting contrast with the idea that the mind of the uneducated - particularly the uneducated native - is a 'tabula rasa'. Andrews has moved away quite decisively from the more rationalistic Enlightenment view of education and, like so many in the late nineteenth century, has a 'romantic' view. Andrews invoked the idea of the light of the 'Logos' as in the passage in John's Gospel. 'If the light is already there, then it is ours to evoke it, not to obscure it...All this really valuable indigenous thought and life should not be lost to the Catholic Church.' He cited the way that Christianity assimilated other strains of thought in the first four centuries. We must not, he said, 'refuse to allow an entrance of the "glory and honour" of the "nations" into the "Holy City" '(a reference to the book of Revelation).⁶⁸

The Cambridge missionaries, (but perhaps especially C.F.Andrews) and many of the other missionary figures that are mentioned in this study such as William Miller,

⁶⁷ Allnutt, 'India's Religious Needs...'.

⁶⁸ C.F.Andrews in correspondence with Bishop Lefroy, published in Occasional Paper 33 of the CMD, 1910 (CMD 129).

T.E.Slater, Bernard Lucas, J.N.Farquhar, and A.G.Hogg, all of them concerned in one way or another with Christian education in India, exemplify a new strand of theology which fitted in well with fulfillment and diffusion. As mentioned, the Cambridge missionaries were disciples of B.F.Westcott who combined Biblical scholarship with a theology of religion which was touched by immanentism and evolutionism and whose favourite missionary image was of the Logos of the first chapter of John's gospel.⁶⁹ Lucas and Slater were both influenced by A.M. Fairbairn, one of the earliest theologians of religion to take a more positive view of non-Christian faiths. Farquhar and Hogg were also influenced by Fairbairn, the first directly and the latter through the theologian David Cairns.⁷⁰ The fact that this list contains missionaries from many different backgrounds: the Cambridge missionaries were Anglicans; Slater, Farquhar, and Lucas Congregationalists; Miller and Hogg were from the United Free Church of Scotland, suggests that what was more important at this point than denominational loyalty was a shared background of thought. At a philosophical level this meant the pervasive influence of neo-Hegelian thinkers such as T.H.Green and Edward Caird. The British Hegelians as they are sometimes called, were a late, and very influential flowering of Hegelianism, in the British Universities (particularly Oxford).⁷¹ It was a reaction to Utilitarianism and perhaps also to the rational attacks on evangelical Christianity.⁷² The central concepts were idealist, into which a Logos theology fitted

⁶⁹ Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love pp.60-71.

⁷⁰ For the widespread influence of Fairbairn, see Cracknell, Justice Courtesy and Love pp.71-81.

⁷¹ There is a full account of the major British Idealists and their influence on Christian thought in A.P.Sell, Philosophical Idealism and Christian Belief (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1995).

⁷² 'The religious "ambience" of British Hegelianism is perhaps sufficiently explained by the fact that German philosophical idealism was a fascinating intellectual

well; immanent, which was an appropriate background to the increasingly important idea of God at work among non-Christian religions and indeed society as a whole ('the Divine purpose...is gradually revealing itself in the education of the human race'); ⁷³ and also evolutionist, which supported the idea of 'fulfillment' and the sort of long term optimism that characterised Westcott and the Cambridge missionaries. Of course for the missionaries in question (and for some of the philosophers) this could become a sort of Divine providence.⁷⁴ There was one further characteristic of British Hegelianism: its moral earnestness and political seriousness, seen, for example, in the highly developed social conscience of men such as T.H.Green and Bernard Bosanquet. There was nothing in the least determinist about the belief in social evolution and progress. Almost all of the figures we have mentioned were involved in education, which was considered a means by which progress was 'driven along'. 'Moral earnestness' was also a characteristic of the statesman, R.B.Haldane, another British Hegelian. He is worth mentioning in this context because he was a Liberal imperialist who believed in the civilising mission of the imperial government. While the new trends in philosophical thought almost always produced a greater respect for Hinduism and a greater religious tolerance generally, it did not always turn its proponents into radical political thinkers.⁷⁵

novelty which arrived at a time when many members of the educated class were looking desperately for something to fill the spiritual void being created by the inability of the traditional faith to withstand rational criticism.' Peter Robbins, The British Hegelians (Garland, New York, 1982) p.92.

⁷³ D.G.Ritchie, Natural Rights (London, 1984) p. 286. Cited in Robbins, The British Hegelians p. 86. Ritchie was a disciple of T.H.Green and became Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of St. Andrews.

⁷⁴ Consider Peter Robbins' assertion that for Edward Caird 'the spirit of reason at work in the world is divine providence'. (Robbins, The British Hegelians p.93.)

⁷⁵ For Haldane see chapter 12 in *ibid.*

Gospel to the rich

Diffusion theory may well have received considerable impetus from the theological underpinnings provided by fulfilment theory. But there was another reason why it remained popular. The most influential voices in missionary education - Duff, Wilson, Miller, the Cambridge Brotherhood missionaries - had invested much of their best efforts in the higher educational institutions. Students from these were consistently described by the missionaries as 'the future leaders of India'. Though conversions amongst this group were few, as we have seen, it was still the hope that a diffused Christian knowledge would 'trickle down' to many others simply by virtue of the fact that these men (and sometimes women) were indeed 'influential'. They were, potentially, the nation's social and political leaders and indeed were actually so in some cases, right at the end of our period. Studdert-Kennedy remarks on the positions of power and influence achieved by Madras Christian College students in his study, already mentioned, of what he calls 'the colonial transaction' of missionary education. He suggests that the College's basic approach was congenial to its students, who were in process of negotiating the political and economic structures of their day. The College stood for three ways in which the 'providential impulse' was expressing itself. Firstly, in affirming the rightness of government itself, secondly in criticising the misuse of government power when appropriate, and thirdly in affirming *some* Gandhian goals.⁷⁶ This was a highly useful mixture for those involved in politics. Significantly, 'the Christian College produced virtually all the prominent figures in the collaborationist Ministries (in Madras) in the

⁷⁶ G. Studdert-Kennedy, Colonial Transaction p. 10.

What is equally significant is the fact that this 'transaction' by which the recipients of Madras Christian College grasped what was on offer at the College and used it effectively for their own purposes, did not entail any overt movement to Christianity as such. Studdert-Kennedy cites the example of one Ottalingam Kandaswamy Chetty who openly confronted this question in an address later published as an article in the Madras Christian College Magazine. Under the title 'Why I am not a Christian', he claimed that he accepted all the 'fundamentals' of the College-style inclusivist Christianity but not at all the need for a Christian commitment. This was typical. Studdert-Kennedy's rather bleak conclusion (at least for the missionary educators) is as follows: 'One is tempted to conclude that "history" set a trap for the missionaries in higher education. We can indeed see them as agents of an unfolding historical logic, but it is not the logic of redemptive History as they conceived it.' ⁷⁸

Despite the unwillingness of graduates from Christian schools and colleges to accept Christianity, missionaries' belief that, at the very least, they would tilt the nation in the direction of Christian values, was understandable.⁷⁹ It remained an extremely popular prediction amongst the missionaries, but one that could only be sustained if diffusion was

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp.22-3.

⁷⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, 6,000 scholars, or 35 per cent of the total number of college-level students (excluding those in professional and technical colleges) were in Protestant missionary institutions. See J.Richter, A History of Mission in India (Edinburgh and London, 1908) p. 320.

accepted as something which was effectively at work. C.F. Andrews, for example, even amongst his increasing doubts about the appropriateness of Western education, felt that because the church was involved in the education of India's future leaders it would be tragically inappropriate to give up its commitment to higher education.⁸⁰ Many even believed that the whole success of missionary work in India hung on this issue.

Certainly, as we have said, the idea remained foundational for those missionaries who were engaged in higher education, such as the Cambridge Brotherhood. And they were not alone. As late as 1918 a missionary such as E. Stanley Jones, who was very much involved in work among the better educated and higher castes, was saying that the winning of the educated classes for Christianity would automatically lead to a breakthrough with the lower classes. Jones was an interesting case. He felt a special call to the evangelism of the educated Indian and held meetings throughout India to which large numbers of young educated men came.⁸¹ As his writings make clear he was reacting against the policy of his own mission, the American Methodists, who had been concentrating their work on the lower castes, outcastes and tribals because of the encouragement of the 'mass movements'. Jones believed that it was indeed possible to reach the upper caste Hindus, if only the right methods were found.⁸² He may have been right. At least he enjoyed a period of remarkable evangelistic success. Jones's approach was similar to that of John Mott and the Student Volunteer Movement, the missionary branch of the YMCA. The YMCA at the turn of the century was an aggressive evangelistic body. It had a ministry amongst educated Indians, relying on reading rooms, libraries,

⁸⁰ D.O'Connor, Gospel, Raj and Swaraj: the Missionary Years of C.F. Andrews, 1909-14 (Frankfurt am Main, 1990) pp. 158ff.

⁸¹ See P.A.J. Martin, 'Missionary of the Indian Road' (unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 1986) p. 98.

⁸² *ibid.*, p. 36.

lectures, 'commercial' classes, opportunities for organised sport, and frequent social gatherings. It was 'Western' in outlook and egalitarian. It often promoted Indian leadership but was not interested in 'indigenisation' in terms of activities. It did have considerable success in 'reaching' educated Christians, though it was not a specifically educational enterprise.⁸³ It is no doubt significant that many of the most successful missionaries working amongst the educated – Stanley Jones, W.E.Slater, J.N.Farquhar, John Mott, Sherwood Eddy – were working *outside* formal educational institutions.

What did not follow was that reaching the educated, by whatever means, was necessarily also a means of reaching the uneducated. The very fact that Jones had to think of his ministry as specifically directed to the educated, suggests that missionaries were being forced to see evangelism as either aimed at the outcastes or the educated. Jones's bold assertion - that all India would be won if only the educated classes became Christians - gathered little evidence as time went by. Mass movement Christians on the whole became Christians in order to escape from the social ties which bound them to their upper caste neighbours. A Christianity now contextualised in upper caste Hinduism had little appeal to them.⁸⁴

Some of the missionaries saw this. John Wilson of Bombay understood very well that the issue of to whom education was directed was one with, to say the least, political and social overtones. In the course of defending the vernacular schools he had set up in

⁸³ For an account of YMCA work in Madras during this period see S.Billington-Harper, 'Azariah and Indian Christianity during the Late Years of the Raj' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis of the University of Oxford, 1991) p. 57.

⁸⁴ This is the thesis of Saral K. Chatterji, 'Indigenous Christianity and Counter Culture' Religion and Society xxxv 1/4, December 1989, pp. 3-17.

Bombay against the pervasive Anglicisation of education, he spoke of his clientele as 'the poor to whom the gospel is preached'.⁸⁵ In a correspondence with Duff, Wilson was clearly put out by the way that Duff seemed to be commending his own work by denigrating other methods notably 'the general education of the natives through the medium of their own tongue'. Wilson pointed out that higher institutions would have to depend on a body of Christians from which to select their pupils.

Some missionaries simply saw the lower castes and untouchables as the most fertile ground for the growth of Christianity; indeed they were very happy to persuade their lower caste and untouchable students that it was the Hindu religion, through the caste system, that was depriving them of their rights and their opportunity to make good in life.⁸⁶

Others believed that they had a duty to start with 'the poor', and others still felt that as a matter of educational strategy vernacular education should come first, as a sort of necessary first storey in a multi-storeyed building. They were trying to create a system where Christians from a humble background would be prepared for higher education through the Mission's schools. In other words, if the social elite could not be won for Christianity, an educated *Christian* elite could be created instead, equally useful for the spread of Christianity and again possibly useful in 'raising up' their less fortunate kinsmen from whom they had originally come. It is very doubtful, however, whether this form of trickle down worked either. On the whole those who were 'raised up' in this way, were alienated from others less fortunate than themselves.

Perhaps there is a more fundamental point here. It could be said that because the

⁸⁵ Smith, The Life of John Wilson p.245. See also above p.72.

⁸⁶ The testimony of Jotirao Phule illustrates this thesis. See below p.342.

missionaries tended to concentrate their education on the rich they were unable to make their educational stance sufficiently radical. Education was offered to the higher castes who were then invited to take what they wanted from it without having to forgo their essential elitism. This had consequences for the offer of Christianity as such. An upper caste Indian could effectively maintain his privileged position in society, as a caste Hindu, and still get the education he required.

Nevertheless, despite its apparent failure, the missionaries found it very difficult to admit that concentrating on the upper castes was simply not working. The success of the 'mass movements' made some of them re-think the situation. Bishop Whitehead of Madras, for example, argued the case in favour of shifting the church's resources from education in the city centres to evangelism in the country districts.⁸⁷ Rev G. Hibbert-Ware the Principal of St Stephen's writing in 1904 actually went so far as to make a moral point. He wondered whether 'the preponderance of the lower classes' in the Indian church was not God's rebuke to the caste system, and gloried in 'so impressive a spectacle as the uplifting of communities.'⁸⁸ But they were the exceptions.

'Trickle Down'

There is general agreement amongst historians that 'trickle down' did not work. There is considerable disagreement, however, about who did actually benefit from the new education. In the Bombay context, as we have seen, Rosalind O'Hanlon has produced evidence that it was the traditional class of leaders, the Brahmins, that appropriated

⁸⁷ There is a brief account of Bishop Whitehead's 'conversion' in chapter 10 below, see p.407.

⁸⁸ G.Hibbert-Ware, 'The Place of Education...'.
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Western education and used it to reinforce their position.⁸⁹ She adduces the testimony of the mid-century Bombay radicals, men like Gopal Hari Deshmukh and Jotiba Govind Phule who were convinced that not only did 'trickle down' not work but that the education received by the higher classes had actually led to a reinforcement of inequalities. Phule was a shudra gardener and believed that providing educational opportunities was by far the most valuable work that the British had done. Britain had conquered India 'to liberate the disabled Shudras from the slavery of the crafty Aryas', and they were doing this 'through the equalising window of Western learning'. The infiltration by the upper castes of the educational system, however, had provided them with a means of exploiting the opportunities the British administration offered and indeed of dominating the system. Phule was clear-eyed in this respect, and pilloried the Government's policy. 'If we can inspire, say they [the Government], the love of knowledge in the minds of the superior classes, the result will be...an unconquerable desire to spread among their own countrymen the intellectual blessings which they have received.' In fact, 'they have educated many children of wealthy men, and have been the means of advancing very materially the worldly prospects of some of their pupils; but what contribution have these made to the great work of regenerating their fellow men? How have they begun to act on the masses? Have any of them formed classes at their own homes, or elsewhere for the instruction of their less fortunate or less wise countrymen?' Predictably the system had led not to the benefit of the lower classes but their greater disadvantage. 'One of the most glaring tendencies of the Government system of high-class education has been the virtual monopoly of all the

⁸⁹ R.O'Hanlon, Caste, Conflict and Ideology (Cambridge, 1985) pp.213-8.

higher offices under them by the Brahmins.’⁹⁰

Judith Brown agrees with this. Her view is that while the secondary schools and colleges certainly produced an educated elite, they were not a new social group or emerging middle class. They tended in fact to come from the higher Indian castes who already had a tradition of learning. In social terms there was no revolution in society and education certainly did not break the power of the Brahmins or the domination of the upper castes. If anything it tended to reinforce existing lines of social division, at least in the first instance.⁹¹ Studdert-Kennedy’s studies in Madras Christian College also bear this out.⁹² By contrast, L.S.S. O’Malley, while agreeing that ‘trickle down’ did not happen, does not admit that it was the leaders of the nation who took advantage of Western education.

If you educate the leaders in the faith that they will with any speed draw or drive forward the education of the masses, you must be sure that it is the leaders you are educating. In fact, the pupils who enrolled themselves were a motley throng...In a country of priests and peasants, the religious leaders and landlords stood aloof.⁹³

⁹⁰ Extracts from the Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee of the Indian Education Committee Vol II (Memorials) p. 141-2, cited in S.Nurullah and J.Naik The History of Education in India During the British Period 2nd edition (Bombay, 1951) pp. 200-1.

⁹¹ J.Brown, Modern India: Origins of an Asian Democracy Second edition (Oxford, 1994) p. 95.

⁹² Studdert-Kennedy, The Colonial Transaction pp. 19-20. Studdert-Kennedy’s conclusions are based on the work of D.A.Washbrook and C.J.Baker in D.A.Washbrook, The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency 1877-1920 (Cambridge 1976); C.J.Baker, The Politics of South India, 1920-37 (Cambridge, 1976); C.J.Baker and D.A.Washbrook, South India: Political Institutions and Political Change, 1880-1940 (London 1975).

⁹³ L.S.S. O’Malley, Modern India and the West (Bombay, 1969) pp. 150-1.

O'Malley is backed up by Bruce McCully:

The educated class sprang from a fairly distinct economic and social stratum of the native population. This grouping, however, did not correspond to the aristocratic pattern which had been in the mind of those who had shaped official policy in the early part of the [nineteenth] century...In contrast to the slight proportion of wealthy natives in the educated class, middle and lower income groups contributed the bulk of the students from the earliest days of the new learning. ⁹⁴

This passage is cited by Mathew Zachariah who adds: 'This new class hastened the disintegration of the traditional Brahmin monopoly on knowledge.' It was 'bourgeois in nature as well as intent and facilitated the development of a native capitalist class in India'. ⁹⁵

This does seem a fairly fundamental disagreement but it may simply reflect different times and different places. The 'leaders' of the nation are defined by O'Malley as 'priests and landlords', and he claims that these 'stood aloof' from education. This was not always the case. In Pune for example the leaders of the community were undoubtedly the Chitpavan Brahmins and they were avid for education.⁹⁶ Also times changed. In due course it

⁹⁴ B.McCully, English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism (Gloucester (Mass.), 1966) p. 185.

⁹⁵ M.Zechariah, Christian Education and Cultural Transformation in India (Madras, 1981) pp. 8-9.

⁹⁶ See Brown, Modern India p. 174.

became clear that education was a means to leadership. Particularly in the more Westernised Presidencies, the educated class aspired to leadership and achieved it, though always in uneasy alliance with the 'traditional' leaders. In any case there is unanimity among scholars on one point. There was no 'trickle down'. Zachariah continues: 'The distance between the new bourgeoisie was just as great as in pre-colonial India: Now, instead of Sanskrit or Urdu, English was the learned man's language.' ⁹⁷ The important conclusion which is reached by all is that whatever the nature of the Western educated elite it never acted as a downward filter.

The next chapter discusses what was in fact the effect of diffusion. The education of the elite may not have 'trickled down' to the less fortunate but that did not mean that it had no impact on society at all.

⁹⁷ Zachariah, Christian Education p. 9.

Chapter 9: The impact of diffusion

Religious impact

What influence did missionary education in fact have other than direct conversions? What were the effects of diffusion? ¹ Christian education had to do, in the opinion of virtually all its proponents, with the impartation of a culture, and for many missionaries of our period it was an assumption that Western culture was much the same thing as Christian culture. Changes in religious attitudes were of course credited to the diffusion of Christian knowledge; but so were the more general effects of 'Westernisation', such as a concern for social reform or new political institutions, or a greater interest in science and technology. The inflowing influence of Westernisation, not excluding imperialism itself ('the blessings of British rule') was claimed as the ongoing march of Christianity, at least by some. We shall begin with the change in religious attitudes.

It would seem that for quite a high proportion of those educated in missionary schools and colleges progressive Westernisation did in fact distance them in some ways from their Hindu past. In 1885 Professor Cowell, who taught at the Government College in Calcutta, remarked:

In regard to the state of mind of the young men it has often been said, and rightly so, that the Hindoos who come to our College have already ceased to believe their

¹ For a brief summary of the impact of Christian missionaries – not just those in educational work – see J. Brown, Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy Second edition (Oxford, 1994) pp.154-5.

own religion... The University had lately established a rule that the students applying...should...fill up certain columns... stating their age, occupation and religion. This declaration caused quite an excitement in the College. Many students came to me and asked me what they ought to sign; they said: You know that we are not Hindoos in our religion, nor can we sign 'Hindoo'. The consequence was that hardly a single student signed 'Hindoo'. Some signed 'Panthéist', some 'Vedantist' but the favourite term adopted was either 'Theist' which was very common or 'Brahmo'. I mention this to show you how the educated young men of India are advancing from the ancient landmarks.²

The same phenomenon could be observed in Delhi. There, the description 'Hindus' was evidently more acceptable, but the trend away from 'Hinduism' (as defined by the missionaries and such organisations as the Brahmo Samaj) was the same. This approach attempted to separate the idolatrous, superstitious and even immoral aspects of Hinduism from its purer philosophical expression.³ The educated elite were often prepared to accept this construct. Speaking of the students in St Stephen's

² Address of Professor Cowell at the London meeting of the CMD, 22 June, 1885, published as part of Occasional Paper 9 of the CMD (CMD 129).

³ It is interesting to compare this approach with that of the earlier Alexander Duff. Duff was prepared to admit there were many 'truths' in Hinduism. 'All the terms and names expressive of the sublimest truths, originally revealed from heaven, it still retains.' (A.Duff, India and Indian Missions (Edinburgh, 1939) p.179). Only, according to Duff, Hinduism had corrupted this revelation to such an extent that it would have been better never to have had it in the first place. (ibid., p. 191) Advocates of the fulfilment school such as William Miller to some extent drew on Duff but there were real difference in their approach. Duff did not see Christ as the fulfilment, or the crown, of Hinduism; rather Hinduism was the target. As we have seen his hope was that Christianity would 'undermine', 'uproot', and 'crumble Hinduism into fragments'. Duff was not alone in his views. Even the generous and courteous John Wilson of Bombay could refer to Hinduism as 'that monstrous system of iniquity'. (See G. Smith, Life of John Wilson (London, 1879) p.96) and even more offensively refer casually to 'the general deceitfulness of the Hindoo'. (ibid., p. 70).

College the Cambridge Mission to Delhi 16th Annual Report (1894) said:

The majority are Hindus, and at present there is a strong tendency among them to endeavour to find in their own oldest books such a religion and morality as they are learning to demand, while they put down all which they cannot but disapprove in the customs and religious practices of their country to later corruptions.

In a letter in the same report a Mr Cunningham remarked:

It is a good year and contains some of our most earnest students. These are all members of what is called the Arya Samaj, a party which aims at great and good reforms in Hinduism. They profess a hatred of all forms of idolatry and regard the existing popular Hinduism and even such beliefs as those of caste to be but a corruption of the true religion which is to be found in the Vedas, the one and only revelation...The danger of such ideas with some is to make them too self satisfied with their higher position. But in so far as it is a genuine desire for something purer than their religion can offer and involves, as it does, a certain amount of facing public opinion, we may trust that it makes the men more capable of understanding Christianity.⁴

These men may have been 'more capable of understanding Christianity' but very few made any overt move into the Christian camp. V. Chakkarai writing in 1913 reckoned, as we have seen, that as a matter of historical record, most educated Hindus who had become dissatisfied with their ancestral faith had been diverted to the neo-Hindu religious

⁴ 'Report for 1893' in the Sixteenth Report of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 131).

movements or theosophy rather than Christianity.⁵

A further indirect attack on Hinduism could be discerned in the area of social concern, for example a greater sensitivity in such matters as caste distinction, dowry, and the needs of the poor. Indeed the social reform movement within Hinduism which characterised our period may have been inspired by Christian teaching either by way of reaction or inspiration.⁶ Not a few Indian social reformers were prepared to admit quite explicitly their debt to Christianity and Christian education. Again, this did not mean that they became Christians. As illustration we could mention the attitudes of the social reformers in Western India - the same men whom we have already met as opponents of the continuing influence of the Brahmins through the educational system.⁷ A man like Gopal Hari Deshmukh attacked 'almost everything in traditional Indian life - the caste system, child marriage, the treatment of widows were particular targets.'⁸ But in his personal life he did not break with traditional ways. Jotirao Govind Phule who founded the Satyashodhak Samaj to save 'the lower castes from the hypocritical Brahmins and their opportunistic Scriptures', and who worked tirelessly, like Deshmukh, for the liberation and education of women, saw himself as a rebuilder of Hindu society. Karsondas Mulji was quite happy to attack a local Maharajah for exploiting women through customary religious practices.⁹ Yet he remained firmly within the Hindu tradition himself. In general,

⁵ V.Chakkarai in the Sixteenth Report.

⁶ There is an extensive discussion of this issue in M.M.Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance (Madras, 1976).

⁷ See above pp.297-8.

⁸ See e.g. Charles Heimsath, Indian Nationalism and Social Reform (Princeton, N.J., 1964) p. 102.

⁹ In 1861-2 a judge found in favour of Karsondas when he was sued by a Maharajah for exposing certain religious practices which included having the right of sexual intercourse with female devotees. The judge said: 'It is not a question of theology that

to quote Charles Heimsath, 'the social and religious rebels of Western India were more anxious for reform than they were concerned with working out a new and integrated philosophy of life for themselves.' ¹⁰ In other words, conversion was not on the agenda. This naturally disappointed the missionaries. M. Murdoch commented of these men that they were 'respectable and philanthropic, but without any strong sense of sin or depth of piety.' ¹¹

In almost every case it was one thing for educated Indians to break with some Hindu ideas and practices, it was another for them to renounce their whole cultural orientation. The missionaries often forgot the simple truth that 'the home is mightier than the school'. In attempting to find explanation for the poor attendance at the Farrukhabad City Girls School the superintendents listed: disease and ill health, religious festivals, weddings, visits to relatives, as well as the growing competition of the Dharma Samaj and Arya Samaj schools, which was evidence of 'a gradually increasing Hindu resistance to mission board education.' ¹² The missionaries here were not simply fighting a resurgence of Hindu thought and influence, but the whole web of family loyalty and custom. No wonder progress was slow. Despite theories of diffusion and fulfilment there is plenty of evidence that the gulf between Christians and Hindus often widened during our period. For example, the growth of nationalist sentiment (from well before the turn of the century) meant that many educated Hindus, even those who were educated in Christian

has been before us, it is a question of morality', in itself a comment that betrays the rationalist, Enlightenment climate of opinion. (See Heimsath, Indian Nationalism p.104).

¹⁰ Heimsath, Indian Nationalism pp. 104-5.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 108.

¹² L.A.Flemming, 'Presbyterian Women Missionaries and Women's Education' in Indian Church History Review vol 20 no 2 p. 141.

institutions, were no longer ready to accept anything that came to them in the guise of Christianity simply because Christianity, in their eyes, came from the West.

J.N.Farquhar, the author of the influential book Modern Religious Movements in India, writing in the YMCA Annual Report, 1903, noted:

Nowadays...feeling has gone so far that there is a strong disposition on all hands to condemn everything Western and praise everything Indian. Apologists are not wanting for polytheism, idolatry, and the grossest of ancient customs; that they are Indian is quite sufficient reason for lauding them as super-excellent. ¹³

Islam

While we have encountered a somewhat surprising optimism amongst many of the missionaries working among caste Hindus, the missionaries tended from the outset to be rather more realistic about the impact of the gospel on Muslims. We may remember that Professor Street of Bishop's College, for example, was by no means over sanguine about the effect of Christian evangelism in a Muslim context. Such evangelism, he said, would need 'the greatest energy of character and intellectual ability...and even these qualifications combined with solid piety will for a long time spend themselves in vain.' ¹⁴

The Cambridge missionaries commented from time to time on the greater willingness of the Hindus to take up educational opportunities than the Muslims. E.H.Bickersteth analysed the situation in a paper published in 1884. His main conclusion was as follows:

¹³ YMCA Secretaries' Report: J.N.Farquhar, 1903 p.102 cited in E.Sharpe, Not to Destroy but to Fulfil (Uppsala, 1965) p.193 n.9.

¹⁴ Rev A.G.Street to Rev E.Hawkins, 18 October 1848 (USPG C.IND.1.13.153).

They have conscientious objections based on the first principles of their religion both to the purely secular system of education in Government schools and to the religious basis of the Christian Mission Schools, objections which find an illogical but not unnatural support in their dislike of accepting instruction at the hands of those who superseded them in the political government of the country...Leading Muhammedans now frankly recognise and confess...how low the position is to which they have been reduced by the policy of isolation and abstention.

Bickersteth quoted a memorial of the National Muhammedan (sic) Association addressed to the Viceroy of India in 1884 : 'It having been admitted in principle that the natives of India should have a share in the government of their country, it is incumbent both on the Hindoos and the Muhammedans to study diligently the language of the dominant race, their mode of thought, their science and their literature.'

On the question of religious conversions Bickersteth was less realistic than Street.

The result of close contact with Western thought cannot be to leave that portion of the Muhammedans of India whom it will affect, where it found them. They will either rapidly fall into infidelity, or accept the Gospel of Christ. With due effort on our part, in a country like India, to whose people neither blank atheism nor a cheerless scepticism has ever proved a resting place, the result cannot be doubtful.¹⁵

¹⁵ Bickersteth 'Indian Mohammedans', Occasional Paper 5 of the CMD. No date, listed as 1884 in index. (CMD 131).

S.S.Allnutt, another of the Cambridge missionaries, rejoiced that a representative of the Board of Management in a Muslim school had asked him to supply a Christian headmaster, in effect to be impartial in the faction fighting resulting from Shia-Sunni rivalry. A Hindu would apparently not do. He would be 'every bit as much biased and involved in intrigues as one of ourselves.' Allnutt displayed here the typical Christian triumphalism at the expense of the non-Christian communities, that was such a feature of missionary thinking. He might have done well to reflect on whether he had been asked to provide a head because he was a Christian or because he belonged to the imperial power.¹⁶

Ten years later another occasional paper for the same mission, this time by Bishop Lefroy, reverted to the same topic. Lefroy advocated a sincere effort on the part of Christian missionaries to get to know the 'strong points' as well as the 'weaknesses' of Islam. He quoted Archbishop Trench, 'To have taught them to pour contempt on all which hitherto they have linked feelings of sacredness and awe, may prove but a questionable preparation for making them humble and reverent scholars of Christ.' Lefroy continued with a criticism of the idea 'of asking great and ancient nations to break utterly with their past, to simply ignore the past history of their land and of its deepest thoughts and to regard it...as sheer waste, to trace nothing of the guiding hand of the loving discipline of God, nothing therefore that can fit on to and find its development and perfection in the life of Christ.' For the sake of balance it should be noted that Lefroy also believed that there was great evil in Islam. His analogy was that of the Fall. The image of God in man (and therefore religion) was not utterly defaced, but it was considerably marred. 'There is also present in it (the character of man) in very high degree the craft and power of the devil

¹⁶ Rev S.S.Allnutt to CMD in Thirteenth Report of the CMD, 1891 (CMD 131).

marring the work of God's Spirit and dragging man down.' ¹⁷

The cultural and political impact

Our brief survey of the religious response to the diffusion of Christianity through Christian education indicates that there was limited success. The Hindu worldview was in some cases undermined, but it was usually replaced by a neo-Hindu alternative. Pride in indigenous Indian religious traditions, which seemed at a low ebb in the early years of the nineteenth century, was clearly reviving by the end of the century, particularly when it became a partner of the growing nationalism. Islam was very little affected by Christian education. Only where Christian education was seen as a welcome escape from Hindu (i.e. caste) domination was there a happier outcome. In general, these seem discouraging conclusions. Was there a more encouraging story as far as cultural and political influence was concerned?

The missionaries who espoused diffusion theory in this period looked back to the benign myth of the Indian Renaissance. The Rev William Stevenson, writing in the Indian Christian Intelligencer in 1878 saw this as a seminal time. He paid tribute to Alexander Duff whose resolution was 'fearlessly to proclaim English [as] the most effective medium of Indian illumination' and continued:

What momentous issues hung upon this decision...Colleges and schools for the teaching of the English language and all it embodies, have filled the land. Western literature, science, philosophy and Christian truth have through this channel

¹⁷ 15. Rev C.A.Lefroy, 'Mohammedanism, Its Strengths and Weaknesses', Occasional Paper 21 of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 129).

poured like a flood, and are gradually transfusing and transforming thought, the feelings, the laws, the customs of the multitude subjected to their influence. A revolution is being effected, not without some loss of good and without some addition of evil, but yet a revolution through which India will pass out of the darkness and death of ages into a new and fuller and higher life. Through other channels besides English undoubtedly the light and life are flowing in; but none, we think, will deny that through this channel they flow in fullest measure and with strongest current.¹⁸

Stevenson typically lumped Western literature, science and philosophy and Christian truth together, and, in so doing, faithfully reproduced the tradition which came over to India through Duff and many of his contemporaries. He did add some disclaimers of his own, however. The revolution was not all good, and English was not the only channel of this revolution, but these counter claims seem rather half hearted.

A similar interpretation was advanced in 1912 by C.F.Andrews in his book The Renaissance in India. Though Andrews later changed to a less favourable view of British intervention,¹⁹ he put the highest value on the decision, associated with Macaulay's Minute, in favour of Anglicisation, quoting John Seeley 'Never on this earth was a more momentous question discussed.' He defended this bold assertion by pointing out that for

¹⁸ W.Stevenson, 'Dr Alexander Duff' Indian Christian Intelligencer vol II, 1878 p. 147.

¹⁹ C.F.Andrews, The Renaissance in India, Its Missionary Aspect, (United Council for Missionary Education, London, 1912) p.33ff. George Thomas, writing very much from the Indian nationalist perspective also rather surprisingly agrees with this standpoint. He writes: 'The humanising cultural challenge of Christianity and the West had become the light and mirror in which Hinduism and Indian culture could see both their weaknesses and their potentialities. George Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1950 (Frankfurt am Main, 1979) p. 47.

the first time Western and Eastern civilisations were coming into prolonged contact. He warmly approved of Duff, and in doing so, advanced a theory of Christian civilisation. Speaking of Duff's ideas, he said:

His principle was this. Christianity is not a mere skeleton of abstract ideas, but a living spirit clothed in flesh and blood. Christian civilisation is in one sense the embodiment of the Christian faith and this Christian civilisation must be given to India as well as the Christian message, if the message itself is to become intelligible. English education, which expresses that civilisation, is not a mere secular thing, but steeped in the Christian religion. English literature, English history and economics, English philosophy, carry with them of necessity Christian conceptions of life; for the atmosphere in which they have been produced has all along been Christian.²⁰

Secular subjects were therefore a true *preparatio evangelica*.

Andrews was prepared to admit, however, that Duff's conception needed subsequent modification. Duff, according to Andrews, believed that what was necessary was the uprooting of Indian civilisation and its replacement by English or Western civilisation. Andrews believed that what was required was assimilation rather than substitution.²¹ He specifically linked this process of assimilation with education. Despite this need for a refinement of Duff's method, Andrews claimed that Duff proved 'educational missionary work' to be 'the most powerful method of approach to Hinduism

²⁰ Andrews, The Renaissance in India p. 33. See comments on this in M.M.Thomas, The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance, (Madras, 1970, First Indian Edition) p. 250.

²¹ C.F.Andrews, The Renaissance in India p.34.

in its higher phases.' He went on: 'It has frequently been urged that the educational method is too costly in men and means, but wiser counsels have prevailed, and the great work of founding and maintaining Christian colleges, with schools to act as feeders, has gone on.' ²²

There was more to be said on this issue however and Andrews returned to Macaulay, blaming him for his 'root and branch method' with regard to Hindu culture. Andrews was extremely anxious to affirm Indian culture while at the same time maintaining his confidence in English education, not just as a missionary tool but as a blessing to all India. Of Indian culture he said that it was 'one of the most imposing civilisations and religious developments in the world' and even more significantly from the point of view of education: 'To neglect the past of India is to fail to utilise the deepest springs of Indian national life.' Andrews brought his two affirmations - Western learning and Indian culture - together by means of the metaphor of grafting one plant onto the original stock. In practice this should mean more teaching in the vernacular, and a methodology whereby 'as far as possible the teaching given is adapted to the environment of the taught.' He went on to cite various examples of educational efforts by the National Movement which were putting these principles into practice.²³

While Andrews attempted to divest himself of the characteristic ethnocentricity of the contemporary Westerner, there did seem to be an illogicality about his position. If, as he had previously claimed, a civilisation embodied a faith system, and education expressed the values of that civilisation, then how could Andrews expect the reaffirmation within the

²² *ibid.*, p. 35.

²³ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

education system of India's culture, which was essentially Hindu, to produce Christians? Perhaps this was not what Andrews wanted to do. Yet Duff - who certainly did want to produce Christians - might have justified his 'root and branch method' on precisely these terms. It is worth noting that subsequently Andrews moved from his version of Macaulayism as expressed in 'The Renaissance in India' to a thorough-going opposition to English education, though he continued to support the work of St Stephen's even after he had left the College.²⁴

Western knowledge no longer an ally?

Stevenson and Andrews, initially at least, held that there was a clear connection, seen in the Indian Renaissance, between the introduction of the values of Western education and the spread of Christianity. As we have seen, this was a widely held view emanating from Enlightenment thought. Until late in our period this would have been an almost unquestioned assumption, particularly as influential missionaries like William Miller were able to connect their fashionable post-Enlightenment theories of providential evolution to the general belief in 'diffusion'.²⁵ Yet, for those who could see it, there were signs that Western knowledge was not necessarily the ally it was once deemed to be. The missionaries had long distrusted 'secular' education but what if secular values were an essential component of the whole Western worldview?

S.S.Allnutt, writing in 1897 to the Cambridge Mission's headquarters on the effect of

²⁴ Daniel O'Connor, Gospel, Raj and Swaraj: The Missionary Years of C.F. Andrews 1904-14 (Frankfurt am Main, 1990) pp. 279-83.

²⁵ See the discussion above pp.314-17 on William Miller's ideas and his connection with the heritage of Alexander Duff.

Western thought on Hinduism, described the M.A. students who had taken the Sanskrit option.

Their present position in religious questions is a remarkable indication of the change which Western education is introducing into methods of enquiry. They start from a premise which to all appearances is the very antipodes of Oriental reasoning. The method must be rational, purely rational. In that there is so far no abandonment of the standpoint of the dogmatic systems. But now-a-days rational is taken to imply induction as its only proper organon. The old systems, I need not say, like those of medieval scholasticism, were purely deductive. But these young aspirants, who have for the most part graduated in Physical Science, are keenly alive to the fact that there is no prospect of making a concordat between Hinduism and modern science (which is what they wish to effect) along these lines. One of them...told me with great fervour that he believed he had succeeded in conciliating science and religion on the inductive basis. I was surprised to find, however, that when asked to expound his discovery, the terms in which he unfolded it were practically a series of a priori theses. The leopard cannot all at once change his spots...[These theses] were really the criteria of a true religion and begun by assuming that religious truth can only be made known by revelation. However much one might agree with such an assumption, it was startling to find him claiming that he had worked out his system on the lines laid down in Mill's logic.²⁶

Allnutt felt that he has detected some inconsistencies in the thinking of his students. Yet

²⁶ Allnutt to CMD in Nineteenth Annual Report of the CMD, 1897 (CMD 131).

the quotation must be at least equally illuminating of the inconsistencies of his. He was somewhat betrayed by the aside 'however much one might agree with such an assumption', which indicated that he, too, must ultimately base his claims of religious certainty on revelation. Allnutt went on to regret that he cannot claim that he could see 'an increased tendency to reckon with Christianity as a necessary factor in such discussion'. What Allnutt apparently could not see was that 'the purely rational method' was a powerful critique of his own religious stance. His unwillingness or inability to subject his own religious experience to the same examination that his students' faith was undergoing, rendered him unable to help them.

In her book, Class, Conflict and Ideology, Rosalind O'Hanlon rightly identified two streams of Western influence. Firstly 'the highly public propaganda of Christian missionaries and evangelicals' and secondly 'the religious and social ideas taken from the Enlightenment in eighteenth century Europe, such as deism, rejection of traditional hierarchies, the re-examination of the claims of revealed religion, and the assertion of natural and political rights of individuals in society'. These two streams, one from the missionary movement and one from the Enlightenment helped to produce the crisis of confidence, amongst Indians, in the Indian pre-modern world view.²⁷ What O'Hanlon also pointed out was that the conjunction of these two apparently inimical thought systems was not so paradoxical. The Protestant attack on Hinduism, for example, was an attack on 'religion' which was not so different from their attitude to Roman Catholicism, at least in its more traditional forms. Thus, many Protestant missionaries in practice set Christian doctrines within a broader rationalist framework. God was seen as the source of creation but essentially separate, exercising a moral government which legitimated his

²⁷ Rosalind O'Hanlon, Class, Conflict and Ideology (Cambridge, 1985) p. 52.

rule; the creation was a witness to the power and rationality of the Creator. The unity of scientific and religious truth which allowed a belief in inevitable social progress - did not, however, possess 'structurally essential connections with specifically Christian doctrines'.²⁸ It was the framework (rather than the doctrines) that appealed to many Western educated Indians, and the parallel attack by 'rationalists' on Hinduism 'provided arguments that Hindu reformers and radicals could use against Christian doctrines, arguments that had exactly the same structure as those the missionaries used against Hindu beliefs.'²⁹ Nor was this true for Hindus only. Carl Pfander (1803-86), a CMS missionary who arrived in India in the late 1830s and who was convinced that public debates with Muslims was the appropriate method in Muslim evangelism found that rational methods were being effectively employed by the opposition. In the 'Great Debate' in Agra in 1854 the Muslim disputants felt that they had gained the upper hand because they were able to force Pfander and his allies to admit that there were variant readings in the Biblical text.³⁰ Missionary ideas were therefore brought into question by a radicalism which was essentially parallel to the sort of critique which had been going on long since amongst radicals in Europe.

While accepting O'Hanlon's overall thesis, I believe there are some elaborations which might be helpful. Firstly there was some connection between the Enlightenment ideological framework and 'doctrine': for example monotheism, and the idea of a Creator standing outside of history. In other words, it was not always possible for Hindus to accept the framework and reject the doctrine as if they were completely separable from

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 54.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 59.

³⁰ For a full account see Avril.A.Powell, Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India (London, 1993) pp. 226-62.

each other. Secondly, the acceptance of the framework but not of Christian doctrine, may also have had to do with the fact that the former could be adopted without stepping outside the Hindu fold in cultural terms. With few exceptions, the social reformers who took a moral rather than a Christian stance, were not persecuted in the way that Christian converts were. Indeed, as O'Hanlon herself has pointed out,³¹ their effective appeal to the 'public interest' often made them popular. The major reformist periodicals, for example, were avidly read and received a copious correspondence, despite official and traditional condemnation. Thirdly, some of the missionaries themselves (William Miller, C.F. Andrews) were themselves abandoning the framework for a more immanentist approach - in European terms a post-Enlightenment idealism and romanticism - and were therefore closer to Hindu thought patterns.

Westernisation - further doubts

Despite the fact that many missionaries openly rejoiced in 'progress', there remained a tension between what they were trying to achieve educationally and many aspects of progressive Westernisation. Allnutt at St Stephen's College, for example, was unhappy about the way that 'Western' subjects - science and maths - were usurping the place of Classical Indian studies. He wrote:

Science students can take up Mathematics or Physical Science in place of Oriental studies. This is a great innovation and considering that at one time our *raison d'être* as a University was supposed to be the maintenance and development of Oriental learning, I was surprised to find how easily, indeed almost without

³¹ O'Hanlon Caste, Conflict and Ideology p. 62.

opposition, this most revolutionary change was accepted. It is in itself a matter for regret that the original programme should have been so departed from in such an integral part of the scheme. I must admit that, though on theoretical grounds I should have strongly opposed the change, yet the educational value of the Oriental languages as at present taught is almost to be reckoned as a minus quantity. If we can subsequently add a distinctively Philosophy course, with some reliable handbook on Hindu Philosophy as an alternative branch for Sanskrit students, we shall have attained a goal where we may be content.³²

A few years later he reverted to a similar theme. Two students 'are probably going to take Sanskrit for their M.A....As they are both really students whose main object is to make the study a means of thoroughly investigating the truth of their religion one cannot but encourage them in their design and do all in one's power to supply them with means for carrying it out.' On the other side, 'In general however the number of students studying Sanskrit has greatly decreased...In the B.A. course there is a general tendency now to forsake Oriental Studies in favour of Mathematics, Natural Science and sometimes, Philosophy.' Allnutt regretted this and felt 'that there will be in time a reaction in favour of these studies.' He reckoned that that had already happened in Bengal because of the 'growing antipathy to things English...which appears...in reversion to rejected costume, revival of Bengali and efforts (largely abortive) to resuscitate Hinduism'; also because of the growth of Christianity and the reaction to it. These developments seemed good to Allnutt. 'Except that all reactions are apt to lack those elements of positiveness and vitality necessary for natural and healthy development, there is much to be thankful for in all this as perhaps the necessary sign of the birth of a truly indigenous, national

³² Allnutt to CMD in Thirteenth Report of the CMD, 1891 (CMD 131).

civilisation.' He was not so happy about the situation in the Punjab (including Delhi) where 'the reaction is the other way', i.e. towards Westernisation and 'far greater encouragement to the study of Oriental languages will have to be offered if the tendency to forsake it is to be checked.'³³ We can see here how Allnutt was in favour of promoting Indian culture, and nervous of inappropriate Westernisation. Whether he was winning the battle, at least in the Punjab, is doubtful, but there is no doubt about his positive reaction to recent developments in Bengal.

While, as we have seen, C.F. Andrews believed that Westernisation had initially been a blessing to India he nevertheless felt that in the Indian church of his day (1910), some aspects of Westernisation had already gone too far, and that a process of helping the church to become less European was essential. An example of this can be found in his correspondence about a new curriculum for 'ordination study' in India, the general tenor of which was that there should be less 'European' input. One of his interlocutors was Bishop Lefroy. He felt that Andrews ignored 'the extraordinary contact into which, in the providence of God, East and West have been brought at the present time in India, and with the immense influence which English life and thought are exercising in India in every possible department - scientific, social, political, philanthropic and many more.' The Bishop could not believe that Andrews wanted to minimise this influence. He however admitted that 'the Faith has been presented by us to India in a far too Western garb.'³⁴ Andrews in a spirited reply, remonstrated with the Bishop about the good effects of English life. The trouble was that it was swamping everything else, 'the influence is so immense as to be almost overpowering.' He concluded by lamenting the way that Indian

³³ Allnutt to CMD in Seventeenth Report of the CMD, 1895 (CMD 131).

³⁴ Correspondence concerning 'Ordination Study in India' being Occasional Paper 33 of the CMD, 1910 (CMD 129).

Christians become 'foreigners in their own land', and how this created a loss of power.³⁵

Andrews in this, as in other matters, was ahead of his time.

Stanley Jones, the American Methodist missionary believed that there should be a strenuous attempt to de-link Christianity and Westernisation. He agreed that Westernisation was now inevitable but he felt it would be better if India were to be allowed to feel the full force of Westernisation, without the mediation of Christianity. One must credit Jones with some original thinking. As an American he was not interested in maintaining the British Raj, which could not be said of nearly all the British missionaries. Thus he was strongly pro nationalist, if only on a pragmatic basis. The advent of Indian rule, he felt, would aid the spread of Christianity. In his attitude to Indian religions he reverted to a sort of Duff\Macaulay style cultural subversion. He quoted Lecky 'there is only one example in history of religion not being subverted by its contact with modern civilisation and that example is Christianity.' He added, 'Hitherto Hinduism and Mohammedanism have nestled up under the British government. The strain and stress of modern life has been on a Christian government. Take away the sheltered position of the non Christian religions and place the responsibility of modern government on Hinduism and Mohammedanism and it will smash them to pieces.'³⁶ Where, of course, Jones was wrong in his analysis, was in his belief - which he took from Lecky - that Christianity was the only religion which has 'not been subverted by its contact with modern civilisation'. Clearly as Lesslie Newbigin and others have recently demonstrated so effectively, Christianity has been deeply affected by 'modern' thought, even to the point of

³⁵ *ibid.*

³⁶ E. Stanley Jones, 'Evangelism Among Educated Indians', The Harvest Field xxviii/8, August 1918, p. 289-96.

subversion.³⁷ Yet Jones had valuable insights here. Christian government was all too often seen by the (British) missionaries as a Divine providence. Hinduism and Mohammedanism did indeed 'nestle up' under this government, but not necessarily in the sense that Jones intended, that they were thereby saved from the 'strain and stress of modern life'. Rather, Christianity's identification with an imperialist government made it difficult for the missionaries to represent its claims; equally for Indians to consider them, in the light of their natural patriotism. The late twentieth century advance in Christianity in India has been achieved at a time when the Indian church has been delinked for some decades from the ruling powers. The linkage between Christianity and Westernisation, so often celebrated in a triumphalistic way, by the missionaries, may in fact have been the poisoned chalice.

Another debate which challenged the prevailing euphoria about the progress of Westernisation was the question as to how far had it truly gone. Those, like the Cambridge missionaries, who had most to do with higher education probably gained a partial impression. Even so, G.A.Lefroy, who knew Delhi well, remarked in 1887 that the city 'has been singularly little affected by Western influence and Christian thought'.³⁸ As usual for the missionaries, he put the two terms - Western influence and Christian thought - closely together.

C.A.Foxley, writing in 1910, developed the analogy between Westernisation and the European Renaissance. He admitted that the Renaissance 'was fraught with dangers and gave scope to a great deal of infidelity'. He continued '...the present breakup of the old

³⁷ See e.g. Lesslie Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (London, 1989).

³⁸ Lefroy to Bishop Westcott in Occasional Paper 12 of the CMD, 1887 (CMD 129).

superstition in India is not without similar dangers, so much so that we hear some Englishmen say it is a mistake to educate the native in India at all.' Here Foxley made an important point. He rejected the above argument not least on the ground that it was impossible to turn the clock back, and that Westernisation was inevitable. 'If we have no one to introduce him to the more enlightened side of Western life, there will never be wanting those who will introduce him to its coarser and darker side.'³⁹

The insight that Westernisation, in its many guises, was an inevitable process is clearly right. Because it contained many aspects, however, it was all the more necessary that, from the missionary point of view, some measures should be taken to ensure that the good triumphed. This was a more active and realistic approach than an all too common failure to distinguish between the benefits of Christianity and Westernisation.

Cultural Imperialism

To what extent were these various developments: the Indian Renaissance, the coming of the Enlightenment, the reliance on the rational method and the overall process of Westernisation, simply examples of a deliberate cultural imperialism?⁴⁰

Gauri Viswanathan has already dealt with the impact of the teaching of English literature as an imperialistic tool, and it scarcely seems necessary to do more than rehearse her central argument.⁴¹ At the heart of Viswanathan's argument is the simple equation that

³⁹ Rev C. Foxley, 'Reminiscences of Two Years in Delhi', Occasional Paper 33 of the CMD, 1910 (CMD 129).

⁴⁰ I am aware of the difficulties attending this concept. I discuss them more fully at the end of the chapter.

⁴¹ G.Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest (London, 1990).

in the system of education that was imposed on India, students were taught English literature with the intention that they came to believe - whether they did or not is another matter - in the supposed inherent superiority of the English race, and that in order to effect this shift in belief the academic discipline was given heavy and unprecedented responsibilities. Here is a summary in Viswanathan's own words:

...the educational model of the West was inadequate to deal with the learned classes of India, possessing as the latter did their own deeply rooted systems of learning and institutions of specialised studies in philology, theology and ancient science. In what must be described as a wryly ironic commentary on literary history, the inadequacy of the English model resulted in fresh pressure being applied to a seemingly innocuous and not yet fully formed discipline, English Literature, to perform the functions of those social institutions (such as the church) that, in England, served as the chief disseminators of value, tradition and authority. The surrogate functions that English literature acquired in India offer a powerful explanation for the more rapid institutionalisation of the discipline in the Indian colony than in the country where it originated.⁴²

We may note how wide Viswanathan's claim is. She is saying that the discipline of English literature, as taught in the institutions of higher education, was intended as a major, perhaps the major, purveyor of cultural values. Also behind this lay the assumption that a moribund Orientalist culture was inevitably 'corrupt' and that English education could be used to invigorate and purify it, by leading it out of its decline.

⁴² *ibid.*, p.7.

Edward Said, has commented on the work of Gauri Viswanathan: 'the system of British education in India, whose ideology derives from Macaulay and Bentinck, is seen to be permeated with ideas about unequal races and cultures that were transmitted in the classroom; they were part of the curriculum and a pedagogy, whose purpose...was...to awaken the colonial subjects to a memory of their innate character, corrupted as it had become...through the feudalistic character of the Oriental society.' ⁴³

Some comments might be added. As Said remarks, it was the system as a whole which had this tendency. There were other 'disciplines', not as important perhaps as the English language, which were expected to perform the same functions: cricket, for example. Secondly the situation with regard to the study of English was complicated. As the ruling race, the English wanted the English language taught not just as a disseminator of values, but because they had decided to carry out the administration of the country in that language and, just as missionaries were hoping to raise up a 'native agency' to do their work, so the government, which could not afford to man all the administrative posts from England, wanted to raise up theirs. W.S.Seton-Kerr, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, made this point explicitly to the graduating class of the University in 1868:

India is a land of undeveloped resources and of hidden wealth...There are mines of hidden wealth to be explored and utilised. There are estates to be surveyed, canals to be constructed, roads to be levelled, bridges to be built. For these and for all other great objects which our progressive civilisation fosters, I trust to see the day when the natives of this country will come forward in larger numbers, and will furnish us with a band of men, born and educated in this country, who shall

⁴³ E.Said, Culture and Imperialism (London, 1993) p. 131.

enable the British Government to rival or even surpass the dim monuments of ancient Hindu tradition, or the more abiding memorials of later Mohammedan rule.

He described English as 'the one language through which all Natives, Brahmin, Sudra, Hindu and Mohammedan alike, ought to pass.' His reasons were partly educational but quite as much utilitarian. He said, 'Apart from its intrinsic worth and excellence, it is recommended to us, in this country, by every consideration of public policy and public convenience,' and he cited the practice of the Romans in introducing Latin as a *lingua franca*. Later, in the context of the spread of education as a sure sign of 'progress' he spoke appreciatively of the fact that 'it should be possible to conduct English official correspondence all over the country by the aid of the Natives.'⁴⁴

As an aside we may ask whether this was an entirely utilitarian position? There was an unexpressed but real confidence that the English language would be the bearer of certain cultural values. He spoke of his pleasure also 'that English story-books should be read in the recesses of many Native houses, that Native journalists should be found to study English papers...that educated Natives should often be found to address public assemblies in the English language.' Seton-Kerr's position was not ostensibly one of cultural imperialism. He said that he was in favour of students who were 'able to utilise and expand the resources' of their own mother tongues, and spoke of 'stirring Oriental stagnation by European activity' and 'moulding into something of consistency and

⁴⁴ Address by Hon W.S.Seton-Kerr, Vice -Chancellor of the University of Calcutta on 19 February, 1868. Text published by Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, 1869. USPG pamphlet collection. Seton-Kerr's remarks also seemed to suggest that English could be used to lead a corrupted Oriental culture out of decline.

coherence two such initially different systems of thought and feeling.' In practice however, the traffic was to be all in one direction. Even when a man like Seton-Kerr admitted that there were 'different systems of thought and feeling', the source of significant action was the West.⁴⁵

Seton-Kerr's rather crudely expressed aphorism 'stirring Oriental stagnation by European activity' reminds us of a subtler and deeper point, which is also noted by Viswanathan.⁴⁶ The educational ideology of the British in India, missionary and government thinkers alike, was by no means a simple replacement theory. We have already seen the prevalence of images drawn from the European Renaissance whereby the torpor of the middle ages, its superstitions and traditions, was supposed to have given way to the new life and ideological ferment of modern Europe. We have already quoted from the C. Foxley, and indeed his expression of the matter is very typical. 'India is having its Renaissance. It is beginning to wake up from the sleep of its long Middle Ages. Only English Scholars are doing for India what Greek Scholars did for Europe.'⁴⁷ These were sentiments that went right back to Alexander Duff.

Whatever the cultural chemistry we must not overlook the economic arguments. As well as the British wanting to encourage English medium education to provide a work force for the Raj, it was also the case that many aspiring upper-caste Indians wanted English because it was a doorway to government jobs. This led in due course to some curious situations. Take, for example the experience of Dr. G.W. Leitner, who was Principal of the

⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁴⁶ G. Viswanathan, Masks of Conquest p. 132.

⁴⁷ Rev C. Foxley, 'Reminiscences of two years...'.

Lahore Government College from 1865. He was a champion of indigenous and 'orientalist' learning, though he was also concerned to raise the standard of English education. In the 1880s he quarrelled with the rising Punjabi elite who wanted the balance tipped more towards English education than Leitner did. This was not the whole of the matter, however. In 1883 the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School was founded in Lahore in response to the death of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. It provided Hindus with a welcome alternative to the Government and missionary provision alike. One of the purposes of the new-style education was to undermine the hegemony of the new 'foreign education' elite, the same group with whom Leitner was quarrelling. In fact the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic School purported to offer many things: 1. the welding together of the classes and masses by encouraging the study of national languages and vernaculars; 2. moral and spiritual education based on classical Sanskrit; 3. the formation of 'sound and energetic habits' by a regulated mode of living; 4. the encouragement of a sound acquaintance with English literature; and 5. the stimulation of material progress by teaching science. In brief: 'English language for adjustment, Hindi for communication with the masses, Sanskrit and the works of Dayanand for moral uplift, and science for material progress'. Something for (almost) everyone.⁴⁸ Notice the 'English language for adjustment' clause. Even the Dayanand School founded because of the supposed Anglicisation of the Punjabi elite, could not afford to overlook the practical implications of learning English. It was often no doubt from this starting point that the student drifted into an appreciation of English literature with some danger to him (or, at a later date, to her) of cultural confusion, and perhaps cultural replacement. This whole process does not contradict Viswanathan's theory, of course, but it does modify it slightly.

⁴⁸ K.W.Jones, Arya Dharm, Hindu Consciousness in Nineteenth Century Punjab (Delhi, 1976) chapter 3. The quotation is from p. 72.

In summary the debate concerning the use of English as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges was a complex one. There were those who saw English as a bearer of values and perhaps a means whereby Hindu culture could be undermined. Bishop Caldwell of the Tinnevely Mission in the Madras Presidency (Tamil Nadu), for example, was a firm believer in the superiority of Western culture. He held to the value of 'the indirect results of the transmitted Christianity of Europe.' He believed that an English convert, even if an artisan, would rise to a higher level than a Hindu convert, even if 'of a superior order', because of the indirect influences of Christian civilisation. On the other hand, he could see no good reason for the introduction of English medium education in the area where he was working. There was, he said, 'a good supply of intellectual food in their own language (Tamil)...We find no difficulty in getting access by means of that tongue to their minds and hearts.' ⁴⁹ On the other hand Murray Mitchell commented: 'It is certainly a fact that presses itself on the attention, that the natives receive Christian instruction through the medium of English with a freedom from prejudice, and a general openness and readiness of mind unknown in connection with their own language. The new vehicle of thought seems to thrust their old thoughts aside, and to clear the way for the conveyance of what is at once new and true...instead of its mental and moral torpor, the native mind is now awakened and the native conscience quickened to life and sensibility.' ⁵⁰ Others simply saw English medium education as a means of expanding the workforce of the British Raj, educating Indians to do the work of government which was increasingly conducted in English, and, as we have seen, many Indians responded to this by wanting to learn English as a means of securing worthwhile jobs. However, as we have

⁴⁹ R.Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevely Mission (London, 1857) pp. 94 and 96-7.

⁵⁰ M.Mitchell, Memoir of the Rev. Robert Nesbit (London, 1858) p.262.

also seen, in the case of some, there was a fascination with Westernisation, which seemed to them the way of 'progress', and others clearly enjoyed English studies and were attracted to the culture offered to them through English Literature and Western science.

When all the arguments from utility have been exhausted there were still huge losses involved in the cultural imperialism involved in the whole process of education through a different language and therefore through a different culture. As Malcolm Muggeridge has remarked:

A people can be laid waste culturally as well as physically, not their lands but their inner life, as it were, sown with salt. This is what happened to India. An alien culture, itself exhausted, become trivial and shallow, was imposed upon them; when we went we left behind railways, schools and universities, statues of Queen Victoria and other of our worthies, industries, an administration, a legal system; all that and much more, but set in a spiritual wasteland. We had drained the country of its true life and creativity, making of it a place of echoes and mimicry.⁵¹

Muggeridge may be inclined to overstate his case. Edward Said's finely balanced judgement seems unarguably compelling.

The great colonial schools, for example, taught generations of the native bourgeoisie important truths about history, science, culture. Out of the learning process millions grasped the fundamentals of modern life, yet remained subordinate dependants on an authority based elsewhere than in their lives. Since

⁵¹ M.Muggeridge, Chronicles of Wasted Time: The Green Stick (London, 1972) p. 115.

one of the purposes of colonial education was to promote the history of France or Britain, that same education also demoted the native history. Thus for the natives there were always the Englands, Frances, Germanys, Hollands as distant repositories of the Word, despite the affinities developed between native and 'white man' during the years of productive collaboration.⁵²

Cultural imperialism was not just a matter of the English language. When we survey the curricula in missionary schools we often see a total reliance on 'the learning of the West'. This could be Western science, fostered in the belief that its superiority over the science of the local culture would rapidly become so evident that Hindu culture would be undermined. It could be the attempted transplanting of a 'classical education'. Often very little, if any, effort was made to invent a curriculum that took into account the Indian context. Grammar schools such as the one at Vepery, majored on the Greek and Latin Classics. Bishop's College modelled its curriculum largely on that typical of a Western theological institution. In due course, Serampore College did exactly the same.

Imperialism - another result of diffusion?

We have already quoted, in another context, Allnutt's response to the idea of a Christian University in the Punjab. There was something slightly sinister about his enthusiasm for the renewed interest of the secular authorities in Christian education.

⁵² E.Said, Culture and Imperialism p. 270. In the pledge taken by Indian nationalists in 1930 asserting their right to independence there is the lament: 'Culturally, the system of education has torn us from our moorings, and our training has made us hug the very chains that bind us.' See Appendix A in Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography (London, 1936 & 1958) pp. 612-3.

Our Christian rulers are beginning to take a bolder line, to see the need of putting Christian Education in its right place, as the dominant factor on which we must rely for raising India out of her present state of moral weakness and intellectual lethargy.

Allnutt continued:

For if the actual results of that education had not been felt to be real and substantial, practical statesmen would not think it worth while to meet and excogitate the daring and original concept of a Christian university.⁵³

Allnutt did not seem to see that the very point that he had made, that practical politicians had practical aims, led to the further consideration that the aims of imperial governments might not be the same as those of educational missionaries. The one might have an educating, Christianising purpose, while the other might have a political purpose aimed at keeping the British government in place. A Christian university might be useful to both, but to fulfil different aims. In fact as far as Allnutt was concerned the situation was probably even more serious. He probably believed that missionaries and politicians had the same aims, though they were pursuing them by different means.⁵⁴ In a sermon at Cambridge he remarked that he found it wonderful to see 'how India's need of the Gospel is being recognised on all sides and in the most unexpected quarters. The politicians look

⁵³ Allnutt, 'Report of St Stephen's College and School' in Twelfth Report of the CMD, 1890 (CMD 131).

⁵⁴ This is the point made by Edward Said: 'Imperialism after all was a co-operative venture, and a salient trait of its modern form is that it was (or claimed to be) an educational movement; it set out quite consciously to modernise, develop, instruct, and civilise.' (E. Said, Culture and Imperialism (Chatto & Windus, London, 1993) p. 269.

to the spread of Christianity as one great source of strength and stability for the permanence of the British Empire.' ⁵⁵ Again, Allnutt seemed oblivious of the danger expressed proverbially as 'he who sups with the devil needs a long spoon'. He did not think that the British government was 'the devil' but no doubt many of his Indian acquaintances did. He never asked the question as to whether the government might have had its own agenda, which was in part, even at heart, inimical to the work which the Christian educational missionaries were trying to do.

The fact is that the Indian government certainly did have its own agenda, different from that of the missionaries, and Allnutt apparently did not discern this. On the other hand he was certainly not simply an imperialist under a missionary guise.⁵⁶ Allnutt, himself, would have known of the long standing conflict between missionaries and government over the unwillingness of the government educational authorities to allow religious instruction in state schools. As we have seen the reason for this was that the British government had set its face resolutely against antagonising the religious susceptibilities of its Indian subjects. It was determined to observe strict religious neutrality in government institutions. What Allnutt might have discerned from all this was that the government and the missionaries were not necessarily on the same path. When it came, for example to the question of 'security', that is keeping the peace, the government put that first, a

⁵⁵ Allnutt, 'India's Religious Needs', Occasional Paper 13 of the CMD, 1884 (CMD 129).

⁵⁶ There is much less support today for the nationalist neo-Marxist thesis that missionaries were covert imperialists. See e.g. Clive Whitehead, 'British Colonial Education Policy: a synonym for cultural imperialism?' in J.A.Mangan, ed., 'Benefits Bestowed?' Education and British Imperialism (Manchester, 1988), also Brian Holmes ed., Educational Policy and the Mission School: Case Studies from the British Empire (London, 1968) especially Holmes's Introduction, and Brian Stanley, The Bible and the Flag (Leicester, 1990) which includes a careful rebuttal of the naive imperialist standpoint. See also my discussion at the end of the chapter.

long way ahead of Christian education. Allnutt believed that Christian education would keep the peace, and some people in government agreed with him. That did not mean, however, that missionaries and government had the same aims.

Allnutt was also overlooking basic psychology. The young, ambitious and somewhat idealistic students at a college like St Stephen's were certainly attracted by some aspects of Christian education, for example the way that rational thought challenged the 'dead hand' of their own tradition, and opened up new possibilities of progress in their thinking. But, as they saw it, embracing Christianity meant, in addition, exchanging one authority for another. The missionaries no doubt liked to think that Christianity and scepticism towards the old ways would be accepted as one package. Their students could conceive little reason for doing this. Furthermore, one suspects that many of the students perceived (if only dimly) that rational criticism was subversive in the long run of all authority - including that of the British Raj. As long as the missionaries and indeed, as it seemed to many, Christianity itself, were allies of the Raj then to become a Christian was to adopt the thinking of the imperialist. By adopting a largely collusive and non critical stance on British rule the missionaries paid a heavy price. By contrast the role of the missionaries in the 'mass movements' among the lower castes, untouchables and tribals was seen as one which challenged the existing oppressive power structures.

Some of the missionaries understood this. We have already noted that Edward Bickersteth in dealing with the lack of progress in the educational work among Muslims perceived that at least part of the reason might be that they disliked being instructed by those who has supplanted them as rulers.⁵⁷ Yet, on the whole, the missionaries deceived themselves systematically (as did the other Europeans in India) that they were making

⁵⁷ See above p.352.

sufficient strides in handing over effective authority to Indians. Lefroy referred in 1887 to the plans that 'the natives...be admitted to a more considerable share than they have hitherto enjoyed, both in the counsels and the executive of our Indian Empire. Students of Indian affairs will know how great have been the efforts recently made to bring about this desirable change.' What is revealing is the reason given for lack of progress. It has nothing, of course, to do with the unwillingness of the British to give up their rule. Rather it is 'the general untrustworthiness and want of uprightness in the nation at large.'⁵⁸

Many of the missionaries had a theory of Divine providence and an evolving Christian civilisation which made it difficult for them to separate church and state and therefore difficult for them not to identify with the British Raj. While this was particularly true of the Church of England and Church of Scotland missionaries, it also applied to the nonconformists who were much more pro-government than in Britain, perhaps because of the solidarity which they felt with their fellow countrymen in an alien environment. In any case, both at home and abroad, imperialism as a sentiment and an ideology tended to overwhelm more customary political judgements. If we go back to the Mutiny of 1857 the nonconformists were quite as 'imperialist' in their responses as the Church of England. Pacifists such as Richard Cobden, who previously led the nonconformist conscience, were swept away. As Brian Stanley has said, 'The mutiny years...laid the foundations for the growing endorsement by nonconformists of a Gladstonian foreign policy which was prepared to countenance armed intervention when the interests of religion, justice and morality were at stake, and ultimately for the more full-blooded Christian imperialism of

⁵⁸ Lefroy to Westcott, in Occasional Paper 12 of the CMD, 1897 (CMD 131).

The 'grand theory' of Christian imperialism tended to by-pass the sordid realities of imperialism and had a wide currency. Its essence was well expressed in 1888 by the Indian Christian theologian, Keshab Chunder Sen. Sen said:

Native society is being roused, enlightened and reformed under the influence of Christian education. The Spirit of Christianity has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian Society, and we breathe, think, feel and move in a Christian atmosphere. Behind the British Empire, from which the sun never turns away his face, behind modern enlightenment, behind America, behind Science and all its triumphs, behind new continents...lies the single great personality - the greatest of all known to us - of Jesus Christ...He seeks to revivify religion in all its ancient earnestness. We owe everything, even this deep yearning towards our ancient Hinduism, to Christianity.⁶⁰

Sen's use of the somewhat romantic expression 'the British Empire, from whom the sun never turns away his face' suggests that he saw the Empire as a blessing (a 'providence') and indeed a blessing which was a result of Christianity.

Sen's statement faithfully reflected missionary thinking and the missionaries often added to it the theme of responsibility. Missionary spokesmen in the late Victorian period commonly employed the vocabulary of imperialism to urge the churches to far greater

⁵⁹ B.Stanley, 'Christian Responses to the Indian Mutiny of 1857' in W.J.Sheils, ed., Studies in Church History (20): The Church and War (Oxford, 1983) p. 289.

⁶⁰ Quotation taken from Appendix E in Occasional Paper 13 of the CMD, 1888.

efforts on behalf of India's spiritual needs. They did so more easily because imperialism had already taken over the moral vocabulary of evangelicalism. Here is Lefroy preaching at Cambridge in 1889.

May God grant that the day may quickly come when our English nation as a nation...may wake up more than it has yet to a consciousness of the extraordinary privilege and dignity, and therewith the infinitely solemn responsibility, which is entailed on us by the possession of that vast dependency.

Lefroy was not unaware, however, that British rule had its downside.

If indeed...after holding the land for our benefit and skimming it of its choicest productions, and pouring into it as a happy solution of difficulties at home, in ever increasing streams our sons...we express our inability or our unwillingness to satisfy its (India's) deeper need, to minister to its sore sickness, how think you will this stand in the eyes of a righteous God?

He then held out the dire prospect, if this trust was betrayed, that God would take the kingdom away and give it 'to some neighbour of ours'. In an era of high imperialism the mere mention of the possibility that Britain was 'skimming it [India] of its choicest products' and solving British problems through emigration, was brave. The conclusion, however, was typically imperialistic. Even now Lefroy could not quite imagine that India would one day rule herself. God would take away the kingdom and give it 'to some neighbour of ours'.⁶¹ Perhaps even the Russians, lurking beyond the Khyber Pass - and

⁶¹ Lefroy's Ramsden Sermon printed in Occasional Paper 15 of the CMD, 1888 (CMD 129).

what could be worse than that!

The Cambridge missionary, H.C. Carlyon, working among the Jats of the Rohak district, showed no embarrassment in linking the success of the British in seizing India with the claims of Christianity. For example, 'Is it not strange that a handful of men from a distant country could conquer your country when it was protected by the three hundred and thirty million gods that you believe in?' ⁶² More cogently he also appealed to the impartiality of British rule. To be fair to Carlyon, he was not just saying that God was on the side of the British, but that a just government, as exemplified by the British administration, was something which God owned and supported.

Just occasionally the awkwardness, even the disadvantages of being allied with the imperial power, did strike the missionaries. Rev C. Foxley, using once again the well worn analogy of the coming of Christianity to India and the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe, remarked 'It is true the position is somewhat affected by the leaders of the Renaissance being also the conquerors of the Empire' though he felt that 'this does not altogether destroy the parallel'. He continued, later in the same address: 'Again, as long as the English are the ruling power, there are sure to be plenty of self-styled Christians from whom it is not fair to form a judgement of the whole native community.' ⁶³

Foxley at least showed an awareness that imperialism was a process which did not simply bring benefits to the conquered, and Rev T. Skelton, who was in Delhi from 1859-63 saw

⁶² Rev H.C. Carlyon, 'Work among the Jats of the Rohtak District' in Occasional Paper 18 of the CMD, 1891 (CMD 129).

⁶³ Rev. C. Foxley, 'Reminiscences of two years...'.

the issues very clearly. As we have seen ⁶⁴ he put down the fewness of conversions from the educational work as a failure in contextualisation but he also felt it had something to do with imperialism. He considered that the preaching of the gospel would never be successful when performed 'by persons...of the conquering race'. He added for good measure, 'It is very hard for the Hindus to divest themselves of the idea that missionaries are not Government agents...all the faults of the British administration, all the scandals of European society, are set down to Christianity'.⁶⁵

J.W.T. Wright also explored the consequences of the British being both the ruling power and a Christian power. He spoke in 1900 of:

The unique position which we (the British) now occupy in India. We, the ruling race, are Christian; consequently, in so far as our religion enters into our public life - which, theoretically, and to a very considerable extent, practically, it does - all our administration is carried out on Christian lines.

There was a consequence, however. He agreed that there should be no interference with the religion of the country by Government, but felt that it was inevitable that 'the public conscience lords it over the private (at least until 'clear theological knowledge spreads more widely and permeates more deeply') and that Caesar gets more than his due.' In some ways this was the old Utilitarian argument that despotism was appropriate for barbarians - until, that is, they ceased to be barbarians, and that was, with a predictable inevitability, a long way off. It was the ever renewed argument of imperialism. 'They must

⁶⁴ See above p.308.

⁶⁵ Rev T.Skelton, speech published in Occasional paper 30 of the CMD, 1902 (CMD 129).

be ruled for their own good and we shall decide what that good is, and when, if ever, their own good means that they can rule themselves.' What was difficult from the missionary point of view was that 'all our administration is carried out on Christian lines'. Wright saw this as a blessing. Others - but not many amongst the educational missionaries in India of this period - saw this sort of Constantinianism as a curse. Finally, the uncomfortable nature of the alliance was illustrated by Wright's comparison between those who had a 'goodly heritage' and should have been ready to 'live and die for Christ in India' and those who were prepared to do the same 'for Queen and country in South Africa'. Being a Christian missionary and martyr in India was not really that different from 'putting down the Boers' in South Africa. ⁶⁶

Gerald Studdert-Kennedy has shown that this religious aspect to imperialism remained a significant factor right up to independence.⁶⁷ It was not just that there were important figures during the last years of the Raj who were committed Christians. Rather there was a 'Christian imperialist discourse' which was widespread. Studdert-Kennedy illustrates this particularly from the period after the turn of the century. His examples include politicians and civil servants, missionary theologians and educators, bishops and Indian church leaders; even Tory die-hards and British Israelites. All these people, so opposed in many ways, 'were rooted in religious beliefs about the social order, the course of history and the imperial connection.' ⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Rev J.W.T.Wright, 'A Plea for Educational Brotherhoods' being Occasional Paper 28 of the CMD, 1900 (CMD 129).

⁶⁷ G.Studdert-Kennedy, British Christians, Indian Nationalists and the Raj (Delhi, 1991).

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.25.

How did this Christian imperialist ethos affect missionary education in particular? In most cases the educational activities of the missionaries were neither intended to support nor undermine empire. Inadvertently they did both. For example, the English speaking elite produced by English medium education often took government jobs and therefore contributed to the maintenance of the system. This was not entirely what the missionaries had envisaged for their graduates particularly when, for example, government departments became staffed by Brahmins who were anti-missionary. On the other hand, the national movement recruited many of its leaders from those who had been to English medium schools and colleges, and this also caused a good deal of dismay among the missionaries.

Supposed evidence of inferiority

Cultural imperialism led to the belief that Indian culture was inferior. In 1887 G.A.Lefroy wrote from Delhi to Bishop Westcott 'The most serious difficulty of all we encounter in Mission work [is] an intensely low moral tone.' He admitted to 'the feeling of doubt which at times steals over one as to how far in spite of all the efforts being made, Christianity is really making headway and gaining ground in the struggle with unbelief and sin.' His consolation was that Britain, for all its failures, proved that Christianity works! He proved this, at least to his own satisfaction, by contrasting Indian society, particularly the conditions of home life, with British. On the political front, as we have seen, he also managed to exculpate the British government for its lack of progress in incorporating Indians in the administration by laying the blame on 'the general untrustworthiness and

want of uprightness in the nation at large.' He added:

It is hard to find even a few men, even in the highest classes, who can be said to be in any really wide sense worthy of faith, of reliance and trust, who can be depended upon - in the same way as you can, broadly speaking, depend upon Englishmen - to adhere to truth and justice, where they come, it may be, in conflict with their race or caste prejudices.⁶⁹

This echoes a widespread missionary consensus. In a memorial to the Viceroy from 'Missionaries engaged in education in India in connection with the Missionary Societies in England and America' there was an unabashed reference to 'A country like India where the virtues of truthfulness and honour are so little understood.'⁷⁰ As an imperial footnote Lefroy reported, in disparaging terms, an Indian judge as saying: 'I have been put here by the English authorities in this place, and what I mean to do is to keep them content and to give decisions as may be agreeable to them.'⁷¹ Lefroy seemed to have no sense of the blame attaching to the imperial power, which had created a system in which large numbers of Indians were dependent for their livelihood on a government which discriminated against them on the grounds of race.

In some cases there is little we can say about the missionaries' perceptions except that they were unrealistic. W.S.Kelley of the Cambridge Mission commenting on the boys

⁶⁹ Lefroy to Westcott being CMD Occasional Paper 12 'Missionary Work in India', 1887 (CMD 129).

⁷⁰ A Memorial to the Viceroy and Governor General in Council from Missionaries engaged in education in India in connection with Missionary Societies in England and America. Printed 1872. (CMS C I 2/0 10 D/2).

⁷¹ Lefroy to Westcott in 'Missionary work in India'.

under his charge remarked that in the matter of truthfulness they 'get no help from the system, rather the reverse, and consequently their sense is blunt in the extreme at first, and the only sin in their opinion consists in being found out.'⁷² Any parent or school teacher might have told him that children are like that all over the world. Significantly though, 'their own system of religion' was blamed. Elsewhere Kelley commented that in the light of the 'superstition and ignorance...positive wickedness and vice' of the 'heathen' home, it would take a long time before 'Christianity gets into the blood'.⁷³ Just to complete the picture Kelley listed some of the boys' bad qualities (he had already mentioned some good points) - 'simplicity in lying, tale-bearing, petty jealousies, cheating at Examinations, quibbling and hair-splitting' and described these as 'Eastern peculiarities'.⁷⁴ One can only suppose that he began his teaching career in Delhi and had had no previous experience of English schoolboys.

The missionaries' attitudes must have had some effect. A Muslim wrote (admittedly in a prize essay competition when he might hope to please his examiners) '...due to the influence of English education, the sense of duty, estimation of virtue, importance of truthfulness and honesty, love of their country and liberty in thought, word and deed, have begun to take the place of the old impurity and wildness in thought, and credulity in

⁷² Kelly to CMD in Thirteenth Report of CMD, 1981 (CMD 131).

⁷³ Kelley, 'The Christian Boys' Boarding House', Occasional Paper 23 of the CMD, 1895 (CMD 129).

⁷⁴ Kelley, 'My First Two Years in Delhi' in Occasional Paper 14 of the CMD, 1889 (CMD 129).

our society.' ⁷⁵

A multi-faceted attack

Many aspects of Indian culture came under fire. The missionaries, extremely proud of their own literary heritage, were very willing to criticise Indian cultures as being poverty-stricken in this respect. S.S.Allnutt's description of Urdu literature was a case in point. He spoke of 'the extremely limited range of good Urdu literature' and continued:

Most of the boys when they get to the third class have read the chief part of what is worth reading. When staying with Mr Lloyd in Agra...I found that the whole readable literature he had been able to obtain for his library did not amount to more than half a shelf, and many of those books were not original.' ⁷⁶

This was akin to Macaulay's famous remark: 'I am quite ready to take the Oriental learning at the valuation of the Orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.' ⁷⁷ Allnutt, however, was writing much later than Macaulay and perhaps should have known better. To be fair to Allnutt he was expressing a concern that the Urdu speaking students did not want to go on and study in their own language. He thought this was a pity, but he did not explore the possibility that the educational model was wrong, that the type of education was too literary, too based on

⁷⁵ Cited in Occasional Paper 4 of the CMD, 1883 (CMD 129).

⁷⁶ Allnutt to Westcott, 30 June 1880 in Third Report of the CMD, 1881 (CMD 131).

⁷⁷ Macaulay's Minute on Education (1835) cited in M.K.Kuriakose, History of Christianity in India: Source Materials (Madras, 1982) p. 122.

'texts'. Quite the reverse. Allnutt was simultaneously claiming that it was the missionary educators who had the superior educational methods and that, once again, India fell short. 'All native teaching is...mechanical' he claimed. 'They (the Indians) are incapable of giving real education.'⁷⁸

Because the missionaries tended to see matters as a clash of civilisations - the Christian civilisation against the Hindu, Western versus Indian, the details of cultural practice became very important. It was imperative to prove that Hindu/Indian civilisation did not deliver as good a quality of life as the Christian/Western civilisation did. Thus C. Foxley, reminiscing on two years in Delhi was, he said, very shocked that the Indians regarded Westerners 'as a people of the most filthy habits because he does not see us conforming to all the details of his own code of ceremonial cleanliness.' He hoped that sometimes the Hindu's eyes were opened to see 'that our kind of cleanliness, though religiously much less pretentious, is infinitely sweeter and healthier than their own.' He rejoiced that when he set an essay on 'Tidiness', 'one of the essayists confessed that tidiness was an English and not a native virtue.'⁷⁹ J.W.T.Wright, in a slightly more positive vein, took up the same theme:

The communication of religious truth by word of mouth is but a small part of the work. The real difficulty is to do for them what parents do for children, assist them to - nay almost force upon them - the practical application of Christian doctrine.

This descends to the smallest matters, washing, scrubbing, sweeping, all actions of personal cleanliness, introducing method and order, habits of industry, regularity,

⁷⁸ Allnutt to Westcott 30 June 1880 in Third Report of the CMD, 1881.

⁷⁹ Foxley, 'Reminiscences of Two Years in Delhi'.

giving just notions of exchange, barter, trade, management of criminals, division of labour.⁸⁰

In fact there was a constant low-level attack on Indian culture usually in the form of unanalysed assumptions. Thus: 'Indian teachers are without initiative, as most natives are' or 'the people of India have become demoralised', it is necessary 'to recreate as far as possible the entire character and tone and mental standpoint'.⁸¹ Or again, 'what India wants at present is not so much M.A.s and B.A.s as men who can be trusted with small sums of money'.⁸² As Edward Said has remarked when commenting on Kipling's *Kim*:

Dotting *Kim*'s fabric is a scattering of editorial asides on the immutable nature of the Oriental world as distinguished from the white world, no less immutable. Thus for example Kim would 'lie like an Oriental'...None of this was unique to Kipling. The most cursory survey of late nineteenth century Western culture reveals an immense reservoir of popular wisdom of this sort.⁸³

As I have briefly illustrated above, the missionaries were not exempt. These attitudes, too, were being 'diffused' by means of Christian education.

⁸⁰ Wright, 'A Plea for Educational Brotherhoods'.

⁸¹ Lefroy, 'General Review of the Work since 1881' in Occasional Paper 16 of the CMD, 1890 (CMD 129).

⁸² Quoted in C.F.Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the SPG. An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1900 2 vols (London, 1901) p. 628b.

⁸³ Said, Culture and Imperialism p. 181.

Second thoughts

Sometimes there were doubts. Bishop Lefroy, the same man who could claim that India had become demoralised and that a wholesale reconstruction would be necessary, admitted that it would be foolish to break altogether with the past. He was happy to join with the exponents of 'fulfilment' theory, and by so doing to suggest that Indian culture and religion was a foundation for the future. Also an occasional Indian voice attempted, from time to time, to set the record straight. V. Chakkarai, in 1913, suggested that the old argument that contact between the civilisations of East and West would prove the superiority of the West was coming under fire. The increasing contact between East and West had convinced many 'Easterners' that the West was by no means so superior as they once thought. What about 'the social evils of the great centres of commerce and industry'? What about the apparent indifference of the great masses towards Christianity - 'the Church in the West has not in recent time played any noble role in social achievement... The social conscience has worked independently of the religious spirit in the great labour movements: in the struggle of poverty against the tyranny of capital, the Church has stood aloof? What he also suggested was that the missionary and the Indian church could convince the educated Hindu if missionaries and church alike were to 'place themselves at the head of all the movements in the land calculated to raise it to a higher level'.⁸⁴ Chakkarai meant the national movement.

The national movement

It is striking that Chakkarai could appeal to missionaries and church to work together in

⁸⁴ V.Chakkarai, 'The Educated Hindu and Christianity', The Harvest Field xxxiii/12, December 1913, pp. 452-8.

the nationalist cause. Perhaps he realised that, despite the many failures of missionary education, it had, along with state education, undoubtedly promoted the nationalist movement, even if inadvertently. George Thomas, to cite one witness, has no trouble listing a significant group of Indian thinkers during our period who were products of Christian education and also nationalists. First of all, he says, they truly integrated Christianity with their own cultural heritage and then, through them, 'Christianity became part of the Indian Renaissance and nationalism.' Indeed the claim is wider: 'The foremost leaders of thought and action in the nineteenth and in this century belonged without ambiguity and without separation to Christianity and nationalism.' Thomas is referring to such figures as K.M.Bannerjea, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Bramabandhab Upadhyay and N.V.Tilak.⁸⁵

What seems much less certain is that this is what the missionary educators intended. As we have seen, on the whole they struggled with the whole concept of Indian nationalism. Some of them, a few, rejoiced that the nation was being prepared for self government, and claimed the credit for taking a vital role in this preparation.⁸⁶ Allnutt believed that 'the present policy of Government in allowing the Indians to rise to positions of high responsibility and dignity is ultimately due to the Christian influences, which underlie and animate it'.⁸⁷ Lefroy, as we have seen, genuinely believed that self government for India was the way ahead and concluded that the Christian mission was all the more important because of this. F.F.Monk (but this was as late as 1930) spoke of the

⁸⁵ G.Thomas, Christian Indians and Indian Nationalism 1885-1958 (Frankfurt am Main, 1979) p. 60.

⁸⁶ For example, A.G.Hogg, 'Political Reform and Hinduism' in International Review of Mission vol 8, no 3, July 1919, pp.313ff.

⁸⁷ Allnutt, 'The Present Needs of the Educational Enterprise in India', Occasional Paper 22 of the CMD, 1894 (CMD 129).

importance of Christian education because of the need to turn out 'those young Indian recruits for the Public Services to whom we are pledged increasingly to transfer the administration of the country'.⁸⁸ Sadly, most of these sentiments were accompanied by cautionary remarks about how the time had not yet nearly come to consider any real transfer of power.

Others displayed more openly ambivalent attitudes. Though they would have agreed that Christian education was producing leaders for the national movement they were not sure whether this was a good thing or not. A cameo of the difficulties surrounding the whole question is provided by the experience of the Presbyterian schools and colleges in the United Provinces and the Punjab. In the last decade of the nineteenth century the leaders of the local nationalist movement were indeed largely graduates of these institutions. They formed voluntary associations such as the Punjab Purity Association - a social reform body, and the Indian Association which was more political in its aims. The Presbyterian missionaries felt that they could support the former but not the latter, and some actually joined the Purity Association (1891) with its professed aims to agitate in favour of temperance and against nautches and prostitution. Also within the Colleges there were associations, such as the Christian Students Association in Forman College, which were pro-Congress. There was considerable debate among the missionaries as to what attitude should be taken to these, particularly as students were regularly leaving Presbyterian Colleges in response to nationalist propaganda, and one of the former Presbyterian schools was actually attacked by a nationalist mob. Was the nationalist movement, in fact, just a cover for an attack on Christianity itself? No clear answers emerged to these

⁸⁸ F.F.Monk, The Cambridge Review, 24 January, 1930.

questions and no clear line of action was followed as a result.⁸⁹

For many within the British establishment, the government and its closest supporters, education was linked quite specifically in some cases to the nationalist movement in a negative sense, and when this was the case the missionary educators found themselves on the defensive. In an extensive and notorious correspondence in the *Civil and Military Gazette*, beginning 24 August 1906, a central theme was an attack on the education of Indians. At the heart of the many problems that currently faced the British in India, according to some of the correspondents, was the fact that they had 'overdone education'.

Has education made the people any happier, more contented, more loyal? That is, after all, the real test of good government and not the number of frothy, truculent B.A.s we turn out. A respected, retired Civilian has said 'Show me an educated native and I will show you a rebel!' And who will gainsay the force of this epigram?

Among the respondents was C.F. Andrews who argued that what was required was 'not less education but...a thousandfold more'.

The attack on education continued. Lord Curzon, addressing the House of Lords in 1907, attributed the growing unrest to it. Even some missionaries took the same line. A later letter specifically criticised mission schools and colleges, whose 'ill-adapted education...causes great unsettlement of mind and feeling'.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ John C. Webster, The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century India (Delhi, 1976) pp. 197-201.

⁹⁰ O'Connor, Gospel, Raj and Swaraj pp. 68-70.

As an overview we may note that many contemporary Indian historians remain impressed by the effects of Christian education with regard to the national movement. Mathew Zachariah puts it simply: 'The Protestant missionaries who came to India brought with them Christian principles about the equal worth of the individual human being, the necessity to glorify God by living a godly life in this world interpreted by each individual according to the scriptures, and a sense of responsibility for one's neighbour.'⁹¹ His point is that whatever the reasons for the spread of Western education (the need for government jobs etc.) as long as the missionaries were so vitally involved in the educational process, these principles would spread. Further these principles - individual human worth, loving responsibly, and care for one's neighbour - were the seed bed of freedom and democracy. K.M.Pannikar, by no means a believer in the overall benefits conveyed by the British Raj, nevertheless says: 'The schools and colleges taught young men the idea of liberty while the Government did everything to suppress it.'⁹²

The national movement and its outcome, Indian independence, was perhaps the most obvious example of an unforeseen consequence of missionary education.⁹³ While there

⁹¹ M.Zechariah, Christian Education and Cultural Transformation in India (Madras, 1981) p. 7 See also, V.Mangalwadi, India: the Grand Experiment (Farnham, 1997).

⁹² K.M.Pannikar, Asia and Western Dominance (London, 1958) p. 248, cited in Zechariah, Christian Education and Cultural Transformation in India p. 6.

⁹³ I am not of course implying that missionary education was the sole cause of the rise of the national movement. Also I think that the 'idea of liberty' often came, even in missionary schools and colleges, through non-Christian 'secularist' thinkers. Commenting on the political climate in the colleges founded by missionaries for the Nadar converts in Tamil Nadu, Robert Hardgrave says: 'In the (college) classrooms the students read Locke and Laski and in the hostels, they talked of Gandhi, Nehru and Swaraj. R.L.Hardgrave, The Nadars of Tamilnad: the Political Culture of a Community in Change (Berkeley and L.A., 1969) p. 207). Judith Brown makes the same point - that the 'great thinkers' of the liberal tradition were being taught in the colleges - but applies it to all Western education. (Brown, Modern India p.81).

were missionaries who foresaw greater Indian participation in government and even a final 'handing over', few envisaged a secular Indian state owing its values to Indian grass-roots nationalism (Gandhi) and democratic socialism (Nehru). Most perhaps would have been disappointed that amongst the 'Western' values that were supposedly represented by the British Raj, Christianity itself seemed to have little place.

In summary, the process of hoped for diffusion achieved very little, and where changes did take place they were not those that the missionaries anticipated or wished for. There was some alienation from orthodox Hinduism among the students in the institutions of higher education, but the movement was towards neo-Hinduism or reformed Hinduism rather than Christianity. In most cases the loyalties of home and community remained much more powerful than new attachments made at school or college. The Muslim community was even less affected than the Hindu. A great deal of hope was attached by the missionaries to the supposed beneficial effects of cultural change, particularly the introduction of English (including English literature and Western science) which was seen as the bearer of Christian civilisation. It soon became clear, however, that even where there was change, 'Western' knowledge was not always an ally to Christianity. For many educated Indians, the secular values of Western thought proved more attractive than dogmatic Christianity. In the national movement, for example, Christian teaching may have been one of the causes of the movement but the outcome was dominated by other more secular values. This may have been because the cultural change implied in Western, Christian education was too close to a much less attractive cultural imperialism, which in turn at times shaded into a full blown political and economic imperialism and even racist attitudes.

The debate about cultural imperialism

The idea of 'cultural imperialism' has been much discussed recently, particularly in the light of the debate over Edward Said's treatment of the theme of 'orientalism'. Cultural imperialism is a term, however, which still has its uses. If we define 'imperialism' quite simply as the rule of one nation over another, usually achieved by force and maintained by all methods available to the imperialist power, then we have to include culture in the picture. Also we must accept that missionaries were in some degree implicated. The fact that the long nineteenth century was marked by both extensive missionary activity and widespread imperialism is not a coincidence.

That having been said, the conclusions of this study are largely in agreement with the recent contribution to the debate by Andrew Porter ⁹⁴ who might be described as largely pro-missionary. Porter begins by pointing out that the debate has not always been clear in terms of definitions and assumptions. What, in particular, do we mean by 'culture'? Is it a whole set of values which we have to take as a unity? If so, is cultural imperialism the process by which a package is 'handed to' the recipient, who is required to take it on in its entirety? Porter argues the contrary case in two ways. Firstly, that the missionary culture was not a 'package'. It was so varied that it is often impossible to define. For example, much of the history of missionary education in India turns on the difference between the Pietist tradition in education, associated with the Lutherans in South India and the Baptists at Serampore and the Duffite tradition, continued by Anderson and Miller and many

⁹⁴ A. Porter, "Cultural Imperialism" and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780-1914' Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History vol 25 no 2, Sept 1997, pp. 367-91.

others. Even when missionaries did have a common background, such as the evangelical revival, it was often modified 'on the ground'. It was the initial success of English speaking schools which persuaded the advocates of 'bazaar preaching' that schools might be the way forward, and the ultimate failure to obtain converts in schools that persuaded a man like Henry Whitehead to think again about the method. The shared evangelical tradition was also overtaken in due course by the idealism and romanticism of a new set of thinkers. This would be true of the 'faith missions',⁹⁵ or the more philosophical evolutionary idealists such as J.N.Farquhar, William Miller and C.F.Andrews. Porter is here joining with some of the dissatisfactions that have been expressed about Edward Said's 'orientalism'. Said is accused of having a monolithic view of the content of orientalism. As David Ludden has pointed out, in the colonial enterprise, as far as India was concerned, orientalism had at least three phases in each of which it was informed by a different sort of knowledge. Up to 1830 colonial knowledge drew on the thinking of the expert 'Orientalists'; after 1830 the information provided by official reports, parliamentary commissions and surveys and the like, was considered reliable colonial knowledge. After 1880 the imperial government and European social theory were the most important producers of imperialist imagery. As we have seen with the Cambridge missionaries and others, Liberal and Christian imperialism, linked to social Darwinism and evolutionary idealism gave orientalism meanings which

⁹⁵ It would seem that the idea of faith missions was abroad in India well before Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission (1865). As already noted, William Bowden and George Beer founded the Godaveri Delta Mission soon after their arrival in the Godaveri in 1836. Bowden and Beer were both in the faith mission tradition having been 'called' to India through the example and preaching of Anthony Norris Groves. See Paul Hyland, Indian Balm: Travels in the Indian Subcontinent (London, 1994) p. 2.

would have been totally contrary to the thinking of the 'Orientalists'.⁹⁶ The point is here, not that there is no such thing as 'orientalism' or that it was not a colonial construct, but that it was a weapon, the nature of which changed over time, and which was available to others as well as imperialists. After all, in India, nationalists in due course also took it up and used it for their own purposes.⁹⁷

Secondly, and more importantly, the recipient culture was not uniform either, nor did it take on Western culture as some sort of indivisible bequest. Edward Said, according to this criticism, has greatly exaggerated the weakness and futility of the 'oriental' response to Western cultural imperialism. There certainly was a response in India after 1800, and in several instances Indians took the initiative in interpreting their own tradition to Europeans (Ram Mohun Roy) or in defending it against them (Vivekananda).⁹⁸ Vasudha Dalmia-Luderitz complains that Said represents the Orient as 'the silent Other', but in fact the Orient, if here we mean India, was by no means silent.⁹⁹ A most revealing study by Eugene Irschick demonstrates the way in which Tamils in South India, in the face of the colonial administration, effectively shaped their own future by 'cooperating' with the British in creating a new cultural identity for themselves. By deliberately making 'the

⁹⁶ D.Ludden, 'Orientalist Empiricism: Transformation of Colonial Knowledge' in C.Breckenridge and P. van der Veer eds., Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament (Philadelphia, 1993) pp. 251-2.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

⁹⁸ W.Halbfass, India and Europe: an Essay in Understanding (Albany, 1988) p. 438.

⁹⁹ V. Dalmia-Luderitz, 'Reconsidering the Orientalist View' in Geeti Sen ed. Perceiving India (New Delhi, 1993) p. 100.

system' unworkable through 'bribery', by sabotaging the taxation system, by hunger strikes and other protests, the local Tamils enforced their will. In the end British administrators and Tamil farmers forged a revised history of the region - a 'golden age' of sedentary farming, something which came to be believed by British and Tamils alike - which was a 'construction' that suited everybody's needs, but chiefly those of the local inhabitants. As Irschick says: 'Colonial culture, no more than any other culture, is defined solely by rulers.'¹⁰⁰ Mani and Frankenberg, who also criticise Said for giving the Orient a too passive role,¹⁰¹ add that Said's thesis, while accurately identifying issues of knowledge and power as being central to Orientalism, often fails to be sufficiently context specific. The Indian response to imperialism is different from that of West Asia, for example. Dalmia-Luderitz confirms this from another point of view. In German orientalism (something which, on his own admission, Said does not deal with) the line between Orient and Occident is rather fluid. In the nineteenth century the German fascination with Indian culture, specifically language but including religion, myth and poetry, had a great deal to do with the needs of German nationalism and very little to do with imperialism.¹⁰² Wilhelm Halbfass confirms this.¹⁰³

To return to Porter and the missionaries, Porter posits a relatively loosely-structured idea of culture which enabled non-Western recipients very often to pick and choose what they wanted from the newcomers. If he is right then this hardly

¹⁰⁰ E. F. Irschick, Dialogue and History (Berkeley and L.A., 1994).

¹⁰¹ L. Mani and R. Frankenberg, 'The Challenge of *Orientalism*' in Economy and Society (14) 1985 p. 177.

¹⁰² Dalmia-Luderitz, 'Reconsidering the Orientalist View' p. 111.

¹⁰³ Halbfass, India and Europe p. 435.

falls under the definition of imperialism. To quote from Porter 'the history of the missionary enterprise offers many instances of indigenous societies taking advantage of missionary resources, not in any abject or desperate surrender to an imposed set of values and conditions, but positively as their chosen and most effective strategy for ethnic and communal survival.' ¹⁰⁴

Even within the limited field of missionary education this study has identified a number of examples of this process. The way that Indian students in missionary schools and colleges often demanded English medium education, and thereby changed the educational policy of the missionaries themselves provides one of these. English was not necessarily imposed by culturally insensitive missionaries. Serampore College had to change to an 'English College' because of 'popular' demand, when it had originally intended to major on Sanskrit and the vernaculars.¹⁰⁵ A more important example would be the way that generations of Indian students in educational establishments chose to take what they wanted – higher education and the openings it provided – and to discard what they did not want, the offer of religious change. The Madras government was virtually forced to give in to the demands of the Madras elite in the 1840s for higher education institutions which were government-run and did not offer Christian instruction. This was despite the opposition of the missionaries and some in government.¹⁰⁶ In the missionary institutions there were very few conversions as time went by. The students may have been content to attend but they did so for education, not

¹⁰⁴ Porter, "Cultural Imperialism" p.375.

¹⁰⁵ See above p.122.

¹⁰⁶ See above p.185.

'religion'. Gerald Studdert-Kennedy has given a powerful example of this whole process at the Madras Christian College towards the end of our period. He calls this the 'colonial transaction'.¹⁰⁷

At another level, many of the Christian students in missionary schools and colleges did not graduate to the service of the church or mission to form the long desired 'native agency', but used their new found educational attainments to secure good 'secular' jobs.¹⁰⁸ Something similar was going on in the villages. The missionaries had one agenda, the villagers another. Those who gladly welcomed educational opportunities – the Nadars of Tirunelveli District would be one example – did so, in some cases, because they believed that it would raise their status within the caste hierarchy, much to the horror of the missionaries who believed that, having become Christians, they would leave their caste prejudices behind them.¹⁰⁹

Finally, an example provided by the clash of ideologies can be cited. Missionaries often used Western education to attack the 'superstition' of their Indian audiences, appealing to a more rational approach. They found however that in some cases their hearers did indeed take up a more rational method but then applied it to the

¹⁰⁷ The description of the 'colonial transaction' at the Madras Christian College is the main substance of G.Studdert-Kennedy's paper, The 'Colonial Transaction' of Missionary Education: Christ, History and Shakespeare at the Madras Christian College, 1860-1940 (Cambridge, 1997). The definition of the 'colonial transaction' is as follows: 'the complex interplay of discourses (colonial, imperial, but also subaltern and indigenous) which articulate, explain, justify, obfuscate, facilitate and resist the relations of power.' (p.1).

¹⁰⁸ See above p.124.

¹⁰⁹ See above p.296.

Christian beliefs of the missionaries, with uncomfortable results.¹¹⁰ In all of these examples, and there were many others, the recipients of missionary education were able to turn the situation to their advantage.

There was an intended imperialism, of course, even if it did not succeed. The Duffite picture of a Hindu edifice which would be undermined by English literature and Western science, in such a way that the whole edifice would crumble, was imperialistic. It was a process that was insidious and not based on choice. Many missionaries in the same tradition, while not as radical as Duff, assumed that Western culture was normative and that in due course their students would come to realise it themselves.¹¹¹ This may seem harmless, but what they excluded was the *possibility* that oriental culture was a worthwhile alternative, or even that it might have its own way of expressing the truth.¹¹² It was, in Gramsci's terms, a cultural 'hegemony' that was being established: it was inconceivable that right minded people would fail to admit, in due course, that the values enshrined in Western education were the best. Equally, it was an unarguable assumption that the values of non-Western cultures were flawed, even corrupt. The sections above

¹¹⁰ See above p.361.

¹¹¹ See for example the extract from William Stevenson on pp. 354-5 above.

¹¹² Ian Maxwell comments that Duff put down his students' incomprehension of his argumentation to their failure to think rationally. He also reinterpreted Hindu philosophical categories into Western terminology. The doctrine of *maya* was a variant of the 'idealism of the Berkeleyan School' and Hindu materialism was a sort of Epicureanism. (I. Maxwell, 'Alexander Duff and the Theological and Philosophical Background to the General Assembly's Mission in Calcutta' (unpublished Ph D thesis, University of Edinburgh (1995) p. 162) Brian Stanley makes a similar point: 'Their (the missionaries') error was not that they were indifferent to the cause of justice for the oppressed, but that their perceptions of the demands of justice were too easily moulded to fit the contours of prevailing Western ideologies.' (Stanley, The Bible and the Flag p.184.).

on 'Evidence of supposed inferiority' and 'A multi-faceted attack' ¹¹³ give some relevant examples. It is at this point particularly that the term 'cultural imperialism' seems a just one.

The idea of 'diffusion' through education has been the main theme of chapters 8 and 9. They contrast with the rather different approach described in chapter 7. This indicates that there was still a considerable debate amongst the missionaries as to the missionary purpose of Christian education. The next chapter reviews this debate with special reference to the World Missionary Conference in 1910.

¹¹³ See above pp.385-88 and pp.388-90.

Chapter 10: The Edinburgh Conference and Missionary Reflection on the

Educational Enterprise

Towards the end of our period there was a good deal of debate among the missionaries about the educational enterprise. This was partly because of the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh (1910) which had Christian education as one of its main emphases, but also because there was already some sense amongst the missionaries that the growing Indian church might soon be replacing them. Some were also speaking of 'a hundred years of Christian education' and stopping to review the past.

The debate took two forms. Firstly there was a critical review of the past in an attempt to identify the process whereby education had reached its present position and to evaluate its successes and failures. Secondly, there was a renewed debate on the aims and purposes of missionary education, issues which were by no means thought of as settled, despite the comparatively lengthy period of missionary endeavour.

This debate, set out in the reports of the Edinburgh Conference and in a number of books and periodicals that followed it, offers a reminder of the achievements of Christian education in India as well as a summary of the missionary arguments about its purposes and aims. It will form a useful base for our own conclusions on both these issues.

Reviewing the past

The review of the history of the previous hundred years focused on a number of key moments and issues: the Indian Renaissance and the reaction to it; the increased

government presence in education from about the middle of the century and its effects; the mass movements and their significance; the 'drying up' of the flow of converts in higher educational institutions and most recently, the inability of the missionaries to maintain the scale of their educational work, and the effects of the national movement.

The interpretation of these events was fairly well established for the first half of the period. The Indian Renaissance remained the heroic period, even to those like C.F.Andrews who were concerned about its negative attitude to Indian culture.¹ With regard to the way missionary education related to government policies, we have seen ² that the missionaries were positive about the Wood Despatch of 1854 and its grants-in-aid scheme and took advantage of it, but were unanimously condemnatory of the exclusion of Christian teaching from the government schools and colleges, and concerned that the government increasingly wanted to replace missionary institutions with government ones, contrary (as they saw it) to both the letter and the spirit of the legislation. In this dispute the missionaries had a clear interpretative line derived from events in Britain. The battles over education there, particularly those which culminated in Forster's Education Act (1870) had also to do with subsidies to 'church' schools and Christian concern about 'godless' state schools. (There were other issues, to do with Anglican, nonconformist rivalry which did not translate to the Indian scene.) Both in Britain and India voluntary Christian education was first in the field and then had to adjust to increasing government involvement. The missionaries in India had long since united under a 'religion in danger' banner, a flag which by the time of the Edinburgh Conference they had been flying for the last fifty years.

¹ See p. 356. See also M.M.Thomas, The Christian Response to the Asian Revolution (London, 1966) and Salvation and Humanisation (Madras, 1971).

² See chapter 7 above.

There was more confusion about the interpretation of comparatively recent events. The influx of new converts into the church through the 'mass movements' suggested to some that a change of missionary educational strategy was called for. Several missions had been agonising over this issue, the more so because of the failure to obtain converts from within the higher education system. As already mentioned Bishop Whitehead of Madras (Bishop, 1899-1922) was one of the most outspoken on this issue. Whitehead had begun his missionary career in Calcutta as Principal of Bishop's College in 1884. In 1890 he explained to a British audience (at Trinity College, Oxford) that the mission's strategy for winning the educated classes in Bengal was (still) to allow 'modern' Western education slowly to undermine Hinduism. Schools, colleges, outside lectures, an English journal ('Epiphany') would do the work. 'I do not feel the slightest degree anxious or nervous simply because we do not produce any immediate results in the way of conversion, or because the results are slow...I feel perfectly sure that, if we only go to work faithfully and patiently, while education undermines Hindooism and leaves us a clear field, in the end Christian truth will win its way.'³ Six years later Whitehead had changed his mind and was prepared to say so. 'There are scarcely any signs as yet that the educated classes, as a whole, are moving in the direction of Christianity. In many respects they seem to be moving away from it.'⁴ Whitehead had, by this time, been deeply influenced by his own observation of the spread of Christianity among the 'untouchables' and low castes in village India.

³ The Oxford Mission to Calcutta Annual Report, 1890 pp 29-30. Cited in S.Billington-Harper, 'Azariah and Indian Christianity during the Late Years of the Raj' (Unpublished D.Phil thesis of the University of Oxford, 1991) pp.29-30.

⁴ See George Longridge, A History of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta 2nd edition, (London, 1910) p. 146.

If Whitehead's attitude was a surprise, then the change of heart, much about the same time, by the Free Church of Scotland must have been even more so. During the 1880s the Free Church had grown increasingly anxious about its large investment in higher education. What might be called the Duffite tradition (concentrating on higher education) had always suffered from the difficulty that it was a 'Moderate' policy, supported by an Evangelical constituency. At the heart of the matter was the failure of the schools and colleges to obtain conversions. There may also have been a general missionary tendency to move out into the countryside and to pay more attention to the needs of village churches. There was natural resistance to these ideas amongst the traditional Duffites, particularly those entrenched in the colleges of higher education, but in 1890 an official report indicated that a disproportionate amount of the Mission's money was being spent on higher education and that there should be a significant transfer of resources into village work, particularly vernacular preaching. Here was an end to the Duffite tradition in the very mission that had initiated it.⁵ A similar discussion, with similar results, took place among the Wesley Methodists.⁶

Another confusing issue, where change seemed necessary, was the missionary approach to the national movement. Many of the students were overtly anti-British as a result and perhaps even anti-Christian. So what was an appropriate response to the movement? This issue has already been discussed in relation to the effects of the

⁵ For a much more detailed discussion of these events and issues see A.Porter, 'Scottish Missions and Education in Nineteenth Century India: The Changing Face of "Trusteeship"' in Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History (vol XVI, Number 3, May 1988).

⁶ G.G.Findlay and W.W.Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society 5 vols (1921) vol. 1 pp. 134-60.

diffusion policy ⁷ and was already important by the end of the nineteenth century.

However, it was to grow even more prominent after the first world war.

Finally, there was no doubt that the government was playing an increasing role in education.⁸ Should missionary education be scaled down as a result? If not, could high quality missionary education be maintained in any case, given the level of financial support from the home countries?

Redefining the aims: the Edinburgh Conference

There was still a great deal of debate about the aims of Christian education, and indeed the same debate was at the heart of the Report produced by Commission III of the Edinburgh Conference in 1910 titled 'Education in Relation to The Christianisation of National Life'.⁹ This purported to look at educational mission world-wide (though without taking Roman Catholic mission into consideration) and its main approach was to record a large number of submissions sent to the Conference by missionaries actively involved on the mission field. This was true of all of the Commissions of the Conference. Each had a questionnaire requesting submissions. The written material gathered by the Conference is therefore a valuable resource when attempting to ascertain contemporary missionary thinking.

⁷ See above pp. 391-6.

⁸ See chapter 6 for a general discussion of the relationships between missionaries and government.

⁹ World Missionary Conference, 1910: Report of Commission III Education in Relation to The Christianisation of National Life (Edinburgh and London, 1910).

The first section of the Report was devoted to India and began with some statistics about Indian education generally.¹⁰ The relevance of these to our study is not so much the overall numbers in Christian education but the proportion of Christian students as against non-Christians. Was there a policy to give priority to Indian Christians? If so this might suggest that the old 'diffusion' policy was indeed breaking down. The statistics show that in absolute terms the number of non-Christian students in Christian institutions was far greater than the number of Christians. However, the Christian population was still a tiny minority. Proportionally, the story was quite different. At every level - primary, secondary and college - an Indian Christian had a much better chance of getting an education than his non-Christian neighbour in a Christian institution.¹¹ How much this expressed a particular policy is difficult to say. Of all the correspondents who contributed to the Report only the Bishop of Madras expressed the opinion 'that the majority of children in Christian schools should be Christians'.¹²

Under the general heading 'The Aims of Missionary Education' there was a strong assertion that 'there is hardly any tendency among our correspondents to doubt the all-important place of education for the missionary enterprise'.¹³ The overall value of the educational method remained the orthodox position. What sort of education was a more contentious question. The three sub-headings in this section were:

¹⁰ The Commission relied on statistics provided in the government publication, Progress of Education in India 1902-7.

¹¹ World Missionary Conference pp. 12-13.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 13n.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 16.

1. The Conversion of Pupils
2. The Development of the Christian Community
3. Preparatory and leavening.

These express succinctly what were considered the three main options.

Under the first, there was the assertion that for the great majority of the Commission's correspondents, 'the conversion of individual students' was the primary aim of the whole enterprise. This had always been the case, they said, and further the 'founding fathers' (Duff is mentioned) had always held this view. One of the correspondents, Dr Mackichan, the Principal of Wilson College in Bombay wrote: 'I hold that the aim of the missionary must be the bringing of the individuals who enter our college to Christ. I cannot conceive of the Church of Christ having any other conscious, deliberate aim than this in its educational work.'¹⁴ There were many other quotations to the same effect, apparently, which the Report could not record through lack of space. One is tempted to say that the missionaries had been saying this for a hundred years.

The Report also recorded, however, under the second heading, evidence of 'a significant growth of opinion towards giving the place of first importance to the training of Christians, whether young converts or children of Christian parents, with a special emphasis on the importance of providing the Indian church with teachers and leaders.'¹⁵ Amongst the correspondents, G.Hibbert Ware of the SPG and previously

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.17.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.17.

Principal of St Stephen's in Delhi, considered 'the education of Christians to be a decidedly more pressing duty of the church than the education of non-Christians'. He reflected the SPG approach which we encountered in Calcutta at Bishop's College which tended to emphasise the importance of church ministries over evangelism.¹⁶ The American Presbyterian, J.C.R. Ewing, at Forman Medical College in Lahore was happy that there should be two aims: the upbuilding of the Church and the evangelisation of non-Christian peoples. However, if only one could be afforded it should be the first not the second. This was a more typically evangelical approach.

Material under the third heading dealt with 'the general diffusion of Christian influences and ideas'. The most influential contributor to this section was William Miller, by then retired from his post as Principal of Madras Christian College. Miller reflected the tradition of Alexander Duff. He was from the same Mission (Free Church of Scotland) and represented in the strongest possible fashion the belief that 'higher education' amongst India's elite remained the best option. He wrote:

Christian education in non-Christian lands is not by any means the only, but it is the chief instrument which the Holy Spirit may be expected to employ in preparing 'the world' to understand and appreciate, and in process of time to seek admission to, the visible kingdom of God on earth. Even if education be not the chief instrument of moral and spiritual preparation in all non-Christian lands, it is certainly so in India.¹⁷

¹⁶ See chapter 5, above.

¹⁷ World Missionary Conference pp.20-1.

Miller went on to emphasise the inaccessibility of the Indian population to normal methods of Christian propagation. In an appendix to the Report, Miller was allowed to state his case at length. In his opinion the caste system created exceptional circumstances in India not found elsewhere. Hindus within the caste system were simply not touched by those outside it, and therefore not by 'the existing Christian community' who were largely drawn from the outsiders. It was for this reason that the Scottish missionaries had always concentrated their education on caste people and also had accepted that making individual converts was a secondary aim. Further 'the really Indian community' (as Miller called it) was already being secularised, and this would present an increasing barrier to the gospel if something was not quickly done.¹⁸ Principal Rudra of St Stephen's College, representing the typical thought of the CMD, added his testimony. 'The greater portion of India is non-Christian, and we dare not withdraw from educational work among these without seriously impairing the influence of Christianity upon the non-Christian world.'¹⁹ The Report follows up this point by emphasising that the successes of Christian witness have largely been amongst the 'tribes and classes that are strictly outside Hindu society'. However, 'we cannot ignore or neglect the other five-sixths of the population. The extreme difficulty of reaching these by preaching is well known. There is no means of introducing them to the knowledge of the Christian faith and life comparable to the open schools.' (By 'open school' was meant a school in which members of all religious faiths were welcome.) Miller was given the last word. He felt that to abandon the educational work among non-Christians 'when hopeful signs of a great result have more than begun to

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 442.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.21.

show themselves' would be a disastrous policy.²⁰ No one could fault the educational missionaries for lack of optimism! It can be said, at least, that the Conference managed to collect in one place all the well-worn arguments: education was a *preparatio evangelica*; caste Indians were inaccessible by other means; the dangers of secularisation could not be ignored; the poor who had come into the church had no influence; success was just around the corner

Though there were three different aims discussed in the Report, it was keen to stress that they were not in opposition to each other. There were indeed those who advocated that the Christian church in India withdraw altogether from the education of non-Christians and confine themselves to the education of their own members, but they were a minority.²¹

The Report then moved on to look at the results of missionary education. It was agreed that over the past few decades there had been few conversions. There was a much more positive claim about 'diffusion'. 'Undoubtedly, those who had been trained in mission schools and colleges were accessible to Christian preaching to a far greater degree than those who had never been under Christian instruction.'²² Despite this firm assurance not much evidence was adduced. What was much more convincing was the claim that missionary education of the outcastes had produced results which had deeply impressed 'thoughtful and patriotic Indians'.²³ This was reminiscent of V.S.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.22.

²¹ *ibid.*, p.21.

²² *ibid.*, p.25.

²³ *ibid.*, pp.25-6.

Azariah's contention that the 'uplift' of the poorer classes was the way to commend the gospel to sceptics. A third major point about the results of Christian education was to do with the raising up of Christian leadership. The opinion of the Commission was clearly that this was the most important result that could be looked for, but also it was an area of comparative failure.²⁴ The reason for this was the way that the missionary force was too thinly spread to be efficient. This meant that teachers often spent their whole time in the classroom, had no time to influence their students in other contexts, and were too busy with 'secular' subjects to allow much time for direct Christian instruction during teaching hours. Also they were too few in number generally to maintain the efficiency of institutions. The recommendation was therefore to put more resources into existing institutions but not necessarily to change the aims or overall style of the education provided. The Commission here opened up a theme that became increasingly prominent, and was repeatedly stressed by such authorities as George Anderson, Henry Whitehead, Arthur Mayhew and A.D.Lindsay.

Before going on to make some recommendations the Report looked briefly at a number of contemporary issues. Not surprisingly one of these was the national movement, and the growing hostility at this time (circa 1910) towards Christian institutions amongst many Indian students linked to it.²⁵ This might have been thought to challenge the aims and methods of the Colleges and to cause some rethinking. The Report noted the rise of a new Indian consciousness and related it to the education process. 'English history and literature, including the modern newspapers, have supplied the inspiring ideas; the English language has furnished the necessary *lingua franca*.' It expressed

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 30-3.

concern that in India anti-British feeling had become anti-Christian feeling. Its conclusion however was not less education. Quite the reverse. 'The conclusion of the replies [by the Correspondents] is unanimous, that ignorance not education is the cause of the religious prejudice that mingles with the political movement; that more and not less education, both secular and religious, both higher and lower, is required.'

Another issue the Report looked at briefly was the relation of missionary education to government.²⁶ The Report acknowledged that government inspection had been a good thing and that 'without Government grants-in-aid, inaugurated in 1854, the great extension of missionary education that has occurred during the past half century could never have taken place'.²⁷ Some pleasure was expressed that in recent times the government had admitted more readily the need for moral education, so bringing government administrators more in line with missionary educational policy. In fact this was a very tame follow up to the moral outrage so often expressed by the missionaries at the government's 'secular education' and their refusal to promote the study of the Bible in government schools and colleges. In general the Report was inclined towards an irenical approach as far as government was concerned. Nobody seemed seriously in favour of turning back from the path of cooperation.²⁸

Two other issues, raised by the Report, may be briefly mentioned. The Report showed some welcome concern about what may be termed 'cultural imperialism'. In particular

²⁶ *ibid.*, pp.30-37.

²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 34.

²⁸ On another related issue, the Report does not feel that there is much of a case for a 'conscience clause' with regard to religious instruction. See 'Compulsory Attendance At Religious Instruction' *ibid.*, pp. 37-9.

it addressed the use of English in schools and colleges. It concluded that the use of English was inevitable for higher education. Some disquiet was expressed, however, over the fact that many missionary teachers had a very distant acquaintance with the vernaculars, and there was an interesting suggestion that even and especially in college classes, religious instruction should be given in the vernacular 'the language of the heart and home'.²⁹ There was a long and painful section on 'The Education of Girls and Women'. Its conclusion was a simple, and entirely functionalist one. 'The aim in our educational work should be directed to the possible and not to the impossible. The possible is to make such a girl [i.e. a girl from within a typical Indian family] a better housewife and a wiser mother than one who has not been to school.'³⁰

The final section of the India chapter turned to specific 'judgements and recommendations'. The most important was that the primary emphasis in missionary educational work should be placed upon the development of a strong Christian community. This would be best achieved by the education of a Christian ministry, by the training of teachers, and by the raising up of a strong well educated laity. The secular approach in Government colleges meant that they could not turn out suitably trained Christian leaders, and so Christian colleges were essential. However, there should be no weakening of educational effort aimed at influencing non-Christians. Also primary schools were still a vital part of the work and so was women's education. Teacher training for women was a particularly good idea.³¹

²⁹ World Missionary Conference p.41.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 51.

³¹ The whole section is taken from *ibid.*, p. 53-5.

The Report was rounded off with some conclusions which applied to the world mission field as a whole but which occasionally referred to particular 'fields'. For example there was a fulsome tribute to Alexander Duff: 'We suppose that no one who is acquainted with India could fail to recognise how great is the debt which India owes to the labours of such a man as Dr Duff, largely on account of the ideals of education which he must be said to have introduced into India.' ³² Some of the points were repetitive, though their repetition did serve to spell out their importance in the eyes of the Commission. An example would be the evident pride felt that the educational missionaries had been instrumental in the 'raising of the outcaste communities, especially in South India', described as 'the most notable achievement' of all the educational work.³³ Some of the remarks broke new ground. For the first time there appeared the idea that education might be a worthwhile aim in itself. If the needs of the people were overwhelmingly great then other ministries – evangelistic, the nurture of the church, or 'leavening' ministries – might have to be temporarily laid aside. ³⁴ However, a minority of the Commission disagreed with this.

When it comes to identifying the primary purpose of missionary education the Report was quite definite.

We wish to lay it down that we believe that the primary purpose to be served by the educational work of missionaries is that of training the native Church to bear its proper witness. And inasmuch as the only way in which the native

³² *ibid.*, p.365.

³³ *ibid.*, p.366.

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.370.

Church can bear its own proper witness...is through native leaders, teachers and officers, we believe that the most important of all the ends which missionary education ought to set itself to serve, is that of training those who are to be spiritual leaders and teachers of the men of their own nation.³⁵

Thus it was, that after a century of debate, the Edinburgh Conference, at least, came down on the side of raising up the native agency as the chief aim of the missionary educational process.

The authors of the report insisted that they were only reflecting the responses they had received from the missionaries in the action. This is doubtful. In contrast to the missionary correspondents, the report put much more emphasis on training up the native agency. It also tended to ignore the emphasis on evangelism, and was over influenced by Miller's arguments on diffusion.

The Report also included as an Appendix a record of some of the discussion which took place at the Conference, after the Report had been issued. While there was a fair amount of agreement about its conclusions this was by no means universal. William Goudie of the Wesleyan Missionary Society believed that the evangelistic purpose of schools and colleges had been under-represented. 'Remember', he said 'that there is a tragedy in the life of every Hindu student who passes out of your school or college and does not become a Christian'.³⁶ By contrast there were those who spoke up for 'leavening'. Rev J.P. Haythornthwaite of the CMS, the Principal of St John's College,

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp.371-2.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.411.

Agra, suggested that it would be a disaster at this point to abandon the education of non-Christians: 'At the present time...our mission colleges...are the most popular educational institutions in the whole country. Our classrooms have never been so crowded.' ³⁷ He made this comment particularly in the light of the national movement. He felt that Indian students wanted to affirm the good ideas they had received from the West, and saw Christian education as an ally in their national aspirations.

Two voices spoke up for the training of Christian leaders. Stephen S. Thomas of the Baptist Mission in Delhi felt that:

Our prime duty is not the leavening of the non-Christian population but the development of the latent energies and possibilities of the Christian Church itself. With all due respects to Dr Miller [the chief protagonist of the leavening theory] I would put not leavening of the non-Christian population primary but the production of Christian leaders in the Christian Church. Are they numerically few? There is still more reason for pushing forward. Are they low-caste? There is all the more credit to those who can take the dust of the earth and make it into gold and press it into the service of God.³⁸

An even more forthright criticism of Miller's point of view was offered by J.A. Sharrock of the SPG, formerly Principal of the SPG College at Trichinopoli. He reckoned that what he called 'aggressive evangelism' was still appropriate and that if it emptied the schools and colleges then that was the price to be paid. He said:

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.413.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.415.

We have had the parable of the leaven. There is also the parable of casting pearls before swine. We have the possibility of reaching outcastes and lower castes, and the question is: ought we to devote the whole of our strength to those we can reach, or to those Brahmins who steel their hearts against Christianity? I believe - I say it in all respect - that Dr Miller has made a fundamental mistake, and that we all, all of us, are apt to make that mistake. We ignore altogether the great middle class.

Sharrock, in his own thinking, divided the population into 7% Brahmins, 27% outcastes and 66% middle class and included such as the Sudras of Tinnevely, amongst whom he worked, as middle class. 'Our work lies with the middle class... It is by getting at the mass of the Sudras and others who number 66% of the people, and who are accessible both to our education and to our Christianity [that the problem of evangelising India will be solved]. He also made a specific plea for those who were already 'native agents'.

We have not done anything like what we ought to have done for the agents, especially our Christian agents. You know our Christian native agents are poor men, left to work on 12 to 16 rupees a month. How can you expect them to do any good work? It is impossible that men who have scarcely had any intellectual training or theological training can do such work, and yet five-sixths of the pastoral work is left to these ignorant or half-educated agents.³⁹

These testimonies – Miller and Haythornthwaite on one side, Goudie, Thomas and

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.418.

Sharrock on the other - came from five different missions: Free Church of Scotland, CMS, Wesleyan, Baptist, and SPG respectively. What divided them? Certainly not the rivalry between Established and nonconformist churches so common in Britain. It would seem that the critical dividing point depended on the context of their work. Those who worked among the elite saw the huge possibilities of gaining 'influence' in the new India. Those who worked among the poor were for 'raising' the poor, especially the Christian poor.

In the years following the issue of the Report, missionaries within India continued the debate. W. Metson, responding to the Commission's analysis in The Harvest Field, believed that 'diffusion' or 'leavening' was the most important. It would be a bad mistake, he felt, for any school or College 'to relax some, if not much, of its effort on behalf of non Christian students' because of spending more on educating Christians. He added 'this is a time when the influences at work on the educated men of South India, political, national, philosophical and religious, are all in need of very special direction and when the direction of them by Christian thought had never a greater or more fruitful opportunity than now'. He defended the 'leavening' method, claiming that it provided a true contact with Christ himself.⁴⁰

A year later in the same journal D.G.M. Leith - also responding to the Edinburgh Conference - put the education of Christians 'to equip Christian youth to represent Christianity to the people' at the head of the reformulated aims for Christian education. Using education as a direct evangelistic tool came second, and he believed

⁴⁰ Rev W. Metson, 'Report on Commission III of the Edinburgh Conference - Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life', in The Harvest Field xxxi/4, April 1911, p.126.

that the time was past, at least in South India, for the 'leavening' aim, as it was for the philanthropic aim of promoting the general welfare of the people.⁴¹

The report of an Edinburgh Continuation Committee Conference in Calcutta had a simpler list of priorities, with the education of Christians - here called 'the upbuilding of the church' considered to be by far the most important task. Evangelism and 'diffusion' came second and third again, but the idea that education might be a philanthropic service to be rendered to the community at large, scarcely received a mention.⁴²

The debate showed no sign of being resolved. S.S.Harman welcomed the formation of the new South India United Church in 1911 and admitted that the evangelistic task would increasingly be theirs. If this was so, he said, the educational policy of the missions should be modified to concentrate on the education and training of the children within the Christian community. This was necessary because the SIUC included people from all castes, but the majority were from the poorer elements and these needed to have superior education to win converts from the higher castes - also to deal with Government officials. Further, the government seemed to be turning away from its support for Christian schools. If government education was becoming more and more widespread then it would be unwise to found more general schools. In particular, the future leaders of the SIUC needed to be educated. If present schools could not be changed, at least let money be raised for scholarships and bursaries for

⁴¹ Rev D.G.M.Leith, 'Missionary Education in South India: Thoughts from the Edinburgh Conference' in The Harvest Field xxxii, July 1912, pp. 248-58.

⁴² The Harvest Field xxxiii/5, May 1913, pp. 182-90.

Christian boys and girls to go on to further education.⁴³

According to E.W.Thompson, the mass movements created new perspectives on educational aims. He attempted to summarise these in an editorial in The Harvest Field for September 1913. He dealt, in particular, with the changing purpose of village schools, which he felt were originally 'an evangelistic agency'. Their purpose had changed to 'a pastoral agency' because of the mass movements. Hence the chief usefulness of the village school 'is the educating of the Christian community'.

Thompson quoted a report from the Lutheran mission: 'Our own Mission has been encouraging village schools ever since the mass movement began about 1876. We are spending at least 8,000 rupees a year on these schools, besides the grants we get from Government.' ⁴⁴ Thompson adds:

The establishment of a great system of Christian elementary schools, the training of a host of vernacular Christian teachers, and the preparation of suitable courses of study for such schools are - in our view - problems of the first importance in Indian Missions today.⁴⁵

On the other side the failure to produce converts in the institutions of higher education produced another sort of discussion. It was not clear to the missionaries what the significance of this was, even whether obtaining conversions was a suitable aim in the

⁴³ S.S.Harman, 'The South India United Church and Missionary Education Policy' in The Harvest Field xxx1/6, June 1911, p. 225.

⁴⁴ Cited from Forty First Annual Report of the American Madura Mission, 1875, published in Madura in 1876.

⁴⁵ Rev E.W.Thompson, editorial, The Harvest Field xxxiii/19, September 1913, pp. 321-3.

first place. John Reid, writing in The Harvest Field (June 1917) looked at this issue. He noted first of all a reply by a Mr O'Donnell in the U.P. Legislative Council (November 1916) to a motion brought forward by the Honourable Mizra Sami'ullah Beg, that in effect asked that there should be an explicit ban on religious instruction by which students were taught a religion other than their own. (He had in mind of course Christian instruction for Hindus and Muslims.) O'Donnell said:

It is true that the missions aim at spreading the knowledge of Christianity, but it is not the case that their teaching is of a proselytising character, or that it aims directly at making converts. Broadly speaking, it might perhaps best be described as moral instruction on a Biblical basis. And it is, of course, notorious that converts are not made.⁴⁶

Reid wondered about this and quoted from an article by J.H. Oldham in The International Review of Missions. 'We are sure that however inadequate our representation of Him may have been, Christ is for India - the promise of freedom, moral achievement, and all that in her highest aspirations she most desires. We therefore freely confess that the aim of our missionary institutions is to lead those who attend them to living faith in Christ.' Reid added: 'Our object is not simply to give moral instruction on a Biblical basis, but so to present the revelation of God in Christ as to lead to a saving faith in Him.'⁴⁷ He claimed that the missionaries were united on this point. (O'Donnell was not a missionary.)

The Lindsay Commission and Report

⁴⁶ J. Reid, 'A Conscience Clause in Indian Schools' in The Harvest Field xxxvii/6, June 1917, pp. 214-224.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*

The World Mission Conference together with missionary comment on it brings us to the end of our period. The debate on education did not end at that point, of course, if only because there were hugely important India-wide developments which directly affected the missionaries and their education. The intensification of the national movement in the 1920s under Gandhi's leadership and, in the Christian church, the remarkable success of the first Indian bishop, V.S. Azariah, together with the movements for church unity in the South could not be ignored. After the First World War it was clear to many missionary thinkers that India was being prepared for 'home rule' and that the future of Christian work lay with the Indian church. That did not mean, of course, that enough was being done, either to affirm India's national aspirations or to devolve authority and responsibility upon Indian church leaders (Azariah was very much the exception) but the general trend of thinking was increasingly influenced by these considerations. They appeared regularly in the missionary records and indeed became a commonplace. For the educational work this meant two things. Firstly there continued to be a rejoicing in such prestigious institutions as Madras Christian College where 'future leaders' and indeed in the 1920s in Madras, current leaders, were being produced.⁴⁸ More important still, however, was the marked turn towards the perceived need to train up Christian leaders from within the existing church. Significantly, this meant a turn away from the traditional elitist clientele (in the High Schools and Colleges) for the simple reason that it was amongst other groups that the church had grown.

These trends came into focus in a report issued in 1931, the work of a commission set

⁴⁸ See above p.336.

up specifically to review Christian higher education in India.⁴⁹ The commissioners, under the distinguished leadership of A.D.Lindsay, ⁵⁰ visited thirty eight colleges of higher education in India over a period of three months in 1830 and made a number of specific recommendations. While the Report accepted the customary three-fold aims of education - conversions, diffusion and the training up of Christian leadership (though it widened this to mean the social uplift of the whole Christian population) – its approval of the first two was distinctly grudging. It pointed out that there had been hardly any conversions. In the thirty eight colleges the Commission had visited it had evidence of perhaps a dozen over a ten year period.⁵¹ There was a case for ‘leavening’ and the familiar *preparatio evangelica* argument was accepted ⁵², but there was not much enthusiasm about this either. The report produced by the Free Church Of Scotland (1889-90) was quoted which wanted to know why if the work of the colleges was a *preparatio evangelica*, fewer and fewer students in Christian colleges were being converted to Christianity, indeed on every hand Hindus were ‘arming in defence of Hinduism’.⁵³

In fact it was the third aim - the ministry of the colleges to the Church - that was, as the Commissioners saw it, by far the most important, and it was in this third department that higher education had most notably failed. Thus:

⁴⁹ Report of the Commission on Christian Higher Education in India. An Enquiry into the Place of the Christian College in Modern India (Oxford, 1931).

⁵⁰ A.D.Lindsay (1879-1952) was Master of Balliol for 25 years and a typical inter-war Christian socialist academic. The friend of Gandhi and Archbishop Temple he was an ideal choice to look into Christian (Protestant) higher education in India. The report of the Commission reflects Lindsay’s lifetime commitment to education for ‘the ordinary working man (and woman)’. See the excellent entry by Christopher Hill in the Dictionary of National Biography 1951-60 (Oxford, 1971).

⁵¹ Report of the Commission on Christian Higher Education pp. 107-8 .

⁵² *ibid.*, p.111.

⁵³ *ibid.*, p.24.

It is often said that the Christian Colleges are necessary to provide leaders for the Church. They provide a body of men who are influential in Government service, at the Bar, in trade, commerce, and in politics, but not leaders of the Church. The Church urgently needs leaders in the villages, but with very few exceptions the young men in schools and colleges will not go into the villages.⁵⁴

A similar passage pointed out the failure of the Christian colleges to connect with the Christians of the mass movements in the villages where, by the time of writing, the majority of Christian people were to be found. It speaks of

the failure of boys and girls of Christian mass movement communities to climb the ladders provided for them by the system of Christian schools...The fact remains that at the top, in the Christian colleges, we are teaching non-Christians and the sons and daughters of Christian preachers and laymen from the towns and cities, while Christian boys and girls from the villages, coming out of the mass movement areas, are rarely to be found.⁵⁵

This was the Report's great emphasis, what it called 'the isolation of the colleges from the Church and the problems this raises'. It illustrated the situation in some detail. First of all the enslavement of the staff to the examination system precluded much Christian service outside of teaching, and even prevented the college staff from adequately challenging Christian students within the college. For the same reason there was no time to learn the

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 20.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p.60.

vernaculars thoroughly. Teachers in higher education were often unable to lead worship or to take part in evangelism, for example, except in English. Also, colleges were not centres of the production of literature either in English or in the vernaculars, as they used to be, and there was no connection between vernacular journalism and the Christian colleges as in the days of Carey's Serampore. Similarly, Serampore had as one of its original ideas 'the preparation of missionaries from those born in the country' as well as providing a more general liberal education. Since that day the two types of education had gone their separate ways and 'theological training was no concern of the Christian college'. Least of all did there seem any possibility that the colleges 'could serve the needs of the village Christians who to so large an extent make up the Indian church'. ⁵⁶

This isolation, said the Report, must be healed.

The Church in her poverty and ignorance cries out for the ministry of the college to lift her up and give her of her knowledge; the college has to learn how blessed it is to give to God's poor...There are questions to be answered, books to be written, religions and philosophies to be understood and interpreted, all for the purpose that the Christian people to whom we are in the first place bound may be lifted up out of ignorance and led into the light. These things the colleges are manifestly called to do. Hitherto men have been enabled to climb one by one up the ladder of learning; there must now be opened a highway for the general body of the ignorant to travel by. This highway in the desert the colleges can build. What Serampore was in the days of William Carey every college should be, serving the Church by the provision of literature in English and the vernaculars, by conducting extension

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 116-7.

schools for village teachers and pastors, by studying the economic problems of the rural and industrial population, by the study of the problems that Hinduism and Islam present. Thus being brought together in mutual understanding and sympathy, both the college and the Church will find their reward: the one the reward the service of others always brings, the other the reward of the breaking forth upon her of a new dawn of hope.⁵⁷

It is significant that the model to which Lindsay appealed was William Carey's Serampore. Perhaps the reign of Alexander Duff had at last come to an end.

To the Lindsay Report may be added one further voice, articulating much the same message. George Anderson and Henry Whitehead, in their influential book Christian Education in India published in 1932, also came out firmly on the side of Christian education being primarily for the local Christians and their betterment. They confirmed that after the Lindsay report this was rapidly becoming the orthodox position. Their conclusion was that for the last fifty years or more the men's colleges had not fulfilled the purpose for which they were originally established (i.e. conversions) nor the purpose of 'preparing the minds of non-Christian students for the reception of Christian truth, or of providing an opportunity of teaching them the Gospel.' Hence the one purpose remaining was the building up of the Christian church. Furthermore, 'the true line of development is in the villages. The Christian church has been growing rapidly in the villages during the last seventy years, and it is in the villages that the Church has most need of leadership.'⁵⁸ While this certainly meant vernacular education it also meant higher

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 118.

⁵⁸ G.Anderson and H.Whitehead, Christian Education in India (London, 1932) p.75.

education in the villages. 'We look forward in the future to village universities, rooted in village life, with a curriculum of sciences and branches of knowledge that bear on village life and industry.' ⁵⁹

They then had some specific recommendations as to how this adjustment might be made. In particular the Christian presence must, for this purpose, be pervasive. Hence, scaling down the overall effort and promoting quality rather than quantity was a priority.⁶⁰

Summary

There was little agreement amongst observers about the achievements of Christian education. The early stages, associated with Duff and the Indian Renaissance were held up by later commentators as exemplary. There was less enthusiasm for and more varied interpretation of the period after the Wood Despatch in 1854. By the end of the nineteenth century there was a clear consensus about the aims of Christian education. The conversion of non-Christians, the training up of Christian leaders (together with, if possible, more general educational opportunities to the Indian church), the general diffusion of Christian knowledge, including sometimes the idea of a civic duty owed by Britain to India and by missionaries to the population at large, were all agreed aims.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.115 This sounds rather utopian, but writers since Anderson and Whitehead have suggested that India's prosperity lay ultimately in the villages. Vishal Mangalwadi has drawn attention to the work of the American Presbyterian missionary, Dr Sam Higginbotham, who founded the Allahabad Agricultural Institute, a sort of rural university, or at least one which was intended to contribute to the renewal of the rural economy. Mangalwadi is bold enough to say that, 'The Nehruvian emphasis, during the post-Independence era, on large, capital-intensive, high-tech projects cast to one side the brilliant experiments that Higginbotham's Institute pioneered in appropriate technology.' (See V.Mangalwadi, India: the Grand Experiment (Farnham, 1977) pp.212-220. The quotation is from p. 219.

⁶⁰ Anderson and Whitehead, Christian Education p.75.

Priorities within these aims were more widely debated. The Edinburgh Report attempted a balance in its discussion but came down firmly in favour of the training of church leaders in its final paragraphs. After Edinburgh, despite occasional voices to the contrary, this was the trend. The continuing failure to make converts in the institutions of Higher Education, also noted in the Edinburgh Report, may have had an influence here. The Lindsay Commission strongly emphasised that Christian colleges were primarily for Christian people and should be used to bridge the gap between educated Christians in the towns and village Christians. Our final chapter presents our own conclusions.

Chapter 11: The purposes of missionary education during the long nineteenth century in India

A consideration of the missionaries' educational agenda, and an attempt to describe how this worked out in practice, will form the final section of this study. It is obvious, however, that the missionaries acted within a particular context, and this shaped their thinking and behaviour. No doubt, in a small way, missionary thought and practice also acted upon the ideologies and practice of the Raj.

Chapter 7 (Missionary education and government) looks at this issue specifically and it is an important theme throughout our study. This chapter, therefore, begins with a review of the ideologies of the Raj, where they are appropriate to educational policy, and adds some comments on their relationship to the educational thinking of the missionaries.

In making this review two methodological points need to be made. While accepting that the missionaries were part of the British presence in India, it is important to listen to the missionaries themselves. The ideologies of the Raj were not necessarily the ideologies of the missionaries. For example, long after the optimism of the 'Era of Reform' had been abandoned in government circles (say in the post-Mutiny period) the missionaries remained notably optimistic.¹ Similarly, the missionaries in their thinking were not necessarily tied to the theological and ecclesiastical agenda in Britain. There are numerous examples of this. Carey and his colleagues went their own way in the ordering of Serampore College, despite intense pressure from

¹ See above pp.321-27.

the BMS in England.² More widely, nonconformist missions in India entered into alliances with government in India which would have been unthinkable in Britain. Secondly, the missionaries by no means spoke with a uniform voice. This study suggests, for example, that the voices of the Scottish missionaries, Duff and Miller, have sounded too loudly, to the point of obscuring quieter voices that need to be heard, if a balanced view of missionary educational strategy is to be gained. In general, this study suggests that in terms of the original and most important aims of missionary education the missionaries were not well served by any alliance with the Raj and its ideologies. The missionaries were close to government during the so-called Age of Reform (c. 1820-55) and close again in some ways at the end of the century. They were not therefore serving their own best interests at those times. This thesis suggests that, in terms of their own aims, when they were closest to government they were the least effective. For the missionaries, English-medium education of the elite was a mistake, so to a lesser extent were grants-in-aid, so was the liberal imperialism of the Cambridge missionaries.

The ideologies of the Raj

Indian nationalists both wanted and did not want 'Westernisation'. The missionaries had their own agenda; alliance with reforming government probably came a long way second to their church work and evangelisation. Similarly, the thinking of the Raj was by no means uniform. Thomas Metcalfe's ideas on 'similarity' and 'difference' help us to understand that, at a fundamental level, there were two rather contrary attitudes running through 'the ideologies of the Raj'. In either case India was defined by its cultural backwardness. One approach suggested that potentially,

² See above p. 125.

if not actually, Indians shared many characteristics with the British and that appropriate cultural change could 'raise' them to a civilised state. The other approach emphasised the enduring differences. Britain's mandate, on this view, was not to make the Indians like the British and therefore 'fit for government' but rather to rule India well.³

The chief proponents of the ideas of 'similarity' were naturally those who were most in favour of 'reform'. At the end of the eighteenth century there was a good deal of respect for ancient Indian customs and there was a school of thought which sought to justify British imperialism by good government and by reconciling the Indian people to their new rulers. This would only be achieved by refraining from innovation.⁴ This caution about innovation was to change with the coming of the Age of Reform. The Age of Reform did not abandon the idea of 'difference'. There was enough 'similarity', however, for it to be possible that Indians might, in due course, be turned into Englishmen. This is what lay behind Macaulay's 'a class, English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'. India's independence was part of this agenda but only when India reflected the 'imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws'. As it was clear that the similarities between Britain and India were not racial or environmental and never could be, it was only a future shared culture that would equip India for ultimate independence. This led to cultural imperialism, an imperialism that was rooted in a devaluation of the

³ The various arguments to do with 'similarity' and 'difference' are the main themes of Thomas R. Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj (Cambridge, 1995).

⁴ See my section on 'Orientalists' chapter 2 pp 33-9.

contemporary Indian culture.⁵

The vehicle of cultural transformation was to be education. But there was a problem here. In Britain education was always religious in nature. Intellectual and moral training went hand in hand. The missionaries were therefore not doing anything unusual when they set up schools which had a religious purpose. The government on the other hand dared not introduce schools with an overtly Christianising purpose. They therefore substituted for the idea of Christian schools a notion that 'secularism' could be a virtue in itself, holding the ring between all the religions, including Christianity, and advocating such 'pure' disciplines as Western science. Actually the bearer of the value system in the Government schools became not science but English literature as Gauri Viswanathan has pointed out.⁶ The missionaries were deeply unhappy about this but the Government remained adamant.⁷

The optimism of the liberal ideology of transformation, described above, continued into the fifties but largely came to an end with the Indian Mutiny which 'confirmed' British suspicions that Indians were essentially different. Education had failed to locate or create the 'rational' Indian, since so many had clearly acted in ways that were contrary to their own best interests. Furthermore, again according to Metcalfe, the idea of the religious conversion of Indians became less popular in mid-Victorian

⁵ Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj pp. 34-5.

⁶ See above pp. 367-8.

⁷ Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj pp. 39-41 and see above pp. 210-18.

Britain.⁸ I doubt this. Where Metcalfe is probably right is that there was a growing distance between missionaries and those who spoke up for the government both in Britain and in India. Even here, as Metcalfe agrees, the Punjab officials who had escaped the Mutiny, believed the time had come to redouble the efforts to spread Christianity and pressed harder than ever for their favourite measure, the desecularisation of Government schools. They received a good deal of support in Britain,⁹ but it is true that the government in Britain and government officials in India became increasingly hostile to the idea. The government's new line was religious toleration, the main theme of Queen Victoria's speech.

In the post-Mutiny period the civilising mission was not entirely abandoned by the government, but it had much more to do, in the government's opinion, with just laws and sound government than a renewed attempt to give Indians a share in government. As Metcalfe has put it 'By the last decades of the nineteenth century, a new imperialism sustained a new vision of India. No longer a land to be remade in Britain's image, it was now the cherished "jewel in the crown" of the queen empress.'¹⁰

The post-Mutiny disillusionment with liberal idealism reaffirmed the sense of Christianity, not as a faith to be shared with the world, but as a sign of England's

⁸ Metcalfe's actual words are: 'Missionary zeal was fast waning in mid-Victorian Britain'. (ibid., p.47).

⁹ See pp. 212-3.

¹⁰ Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj p.65.

intrinsic superiority.¹¹ Few Europeans in India (apart from the missionaries) believed any more that Christianity would overcome Indian religion in the way that it had the polytheism of the Roman Empire. Instead they believed that Christianity was a faith for Europeans. Religion and race went together and India was not to be changed by attempted religious conversions, but governed as it was.

The ideology of liberalism, with its optimistic assumption that India could be transformed on a European model, did not wholly disappear during the later decades of the nineteenth century.¹² This optimism was often largely carried by Western education. Inasmuch as 'progress' was still an aim, education must continue to be important. Much of the justification for empire still hinged on this idea; the British could not ultimately be satisfied with the notion of themselves as Mughal emperors surrounded by feudal tributaries. The role and tasks of schoolmasters could not so easily be renounced.¹³ Ripon introduced for the first time (1882) into Indian local government the objective of training Indians for self-rule, and he did so on the basis of what had already been achieved through education. The idea was that the English educated Indians should be

¹¹ Metcalfe gives an interesting example, in the light of the source material of this thesis. He points out that Church architecture remained rigidly Western in style, and that attempts by the Cambridge Brotherhood, for example, to go against this trend by designing 'oriental' College buildings only provoked opposition. 'I cannot but regard as fatal the idea of carrying on Christian teaching in a building entirely surrounded with symbols, suggestions and associations which are opposed to Christianity.' (ibid., p. 90) Here again we should distinguish between the attitudes of 'official' India and some at least of the missionaries. In fact it seems that the Cambridge missionaries were thoroughly pleased with themselves over the 'oriental' design of the new building. (See 'An Account of the Opening of the New Buildings of St Stephen's College, Delhi' Occasional Paper (19) of the CMD (CMD 129).

¹² Certainly it did not among the missionaries. The Cambridge missionaries were optimistic enough. See above pp.321-7.

¹³ Metcalfe, Ideologies of the Raj pp.199-200.

representatives of the Indian public. Nevertheless the Ilbert Bill (1882-3), which stemmed from Ripon's ideology, was enacted in the midst of a far-reaching ideological clash. On one side there was the liberal belief in equality and the transformative powers of education; on the other the advocates of 'difference'. Different races needed to be treated differently. Alfred Lyall, a member of the government generally sympathetic to Indian aspirations, demonstrated the ambiguities that were being expressed. He agreed that Indians, having been educated, must necessarily be admitted to government. On the other hand he said of education that the only likely outcome was 'to add to our difficulties'. He admitted that there was now no turning back, but he remained pessimistic about its ultimate effects. Others went much further. James Fitzjames Stephen, though a Liberal in theory and a utilitarian, simply repudiated the idea that Britain's right to rule derived from its good government and put it down instead to the inherent superiority of a conquering people.¹⁴

The above debate had a long history. The educational missionaries on the whole were on the side of the liberals. They had after all invested in a transformative enterprise, even if they were very vague about the outcome. Government alternated between the two poles. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report of 1918 was a notable blow for the liberal cause. The Report affirmed that the ideas being expressed by India's educated were thoughts that they had received from the British. The present unrest and demand for self government was the 'inevitable result of education in the history and thought of Europe.'¹⁵ This was also, on the whole, the missionary line.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp.201-210.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p.226.

When the time came for Indian independence, it was the liberal vision that was read back into the whole process and made the official version. As Metcalfe puts it: 'Macaulay and Mountbatten, the last viceroy, were thus linked indissolubly together as the beginning and end of a chain forged of liberal idealism.' Yet this overlooks the ideology of 'difference', an ideology which lived on, and may have appeared, in the light of the last fifty years, to have triumphed.¹⁶

Two further themes emerge from the struggle between ideologies of 'similarity' and 'difference'. Those who, following Macaulay, pinned their hope on 'similarity' necessarily tended to favour an intrusive model of education, if not of government. The Indian must be changed to an Englishman. English would be the language of government, not just for the sake of convenience, but because English literature and Western science were tools of transformation. Here some of the missionaries, who had reasons of their own to desire cultural transformation, made common cause with the government. Alexander Duff is the obvious example, and he describes this agenda very clearly in his book 'India and Indian Missions'.¹⁷ Duff set the fashion, and he was followed, in this respect, by many others. However, as has been demonstrated, this worked out badly for missionary education. In terms of the missionary's primary purpose - the establishment of an Indian church - the elitist, English medium education was not particularly effective. What can also be demonstrated is that the strategy worked out badly for the government also, if government's aim was ultimately to hand over the rule of the country to a trained Indian elite. The failure of government education to match the needs of independent

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.233.

¹⁷ See above p.61.

India is one of the themes dealt with below in a section which draws on the work of Paul Brass.

What missionaries like Duff and his successors did was to 'side with' the Enlightenment, without really understanding the damage they were doing (Chapter 3). They did so with the hope of gaining conversions, of course, but as a long term strategy this failed. As Metcalfe also pointed out, one difficulty which the government (and the Duffite missionaries) encountered in India was the sacred/secular divide so typical of Enlightenment thought. Government belonged to the secular. Thus government education could not be religious. The missionaries were very unhappy about this, and protested vigorously about, for example, the exclusion of the Bible from government institutions, but their own education was much more secular than they allowed. For one thing, as has been demonstrated,¹⁸ 'Western' education both missionary and government, tended to contain concealed premises that were 'secular' in nature. What was even more important was that Western educators remained outside the 'spiritual' or 'sacred' worlds of their Indian students. Here we can draw on the work of Partha Chatterjee.¹⁹

National resistance to Western ideologies

Partha Chatterjee contends that anticolonial nationalism created its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it began its political battle. It divided the world into two domains – 'material' and 'spiritual' and claimed the latter as its

¹⁸ See e.g p.84 n.58.

¹⁹ Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993).

own. The material was the realm of the economy, of statecraft, of science and technology. In this area it was generally agreed, at least in the Age of Reform, that the west had proved its superiority and this needed to be acknowledged and its achievements studied and replicated. The spiritual, however, the 'inner' domain bore the 'essential' marks of cultural identity. The greater the successes in imitating the west in the material realm, the greater the need to preserve one's spiritual culture. The period of social reform in India was made up of two phases. In the earlier, Indian reformers looked to colonial administrators to bring about change. (It was in this period that missionary higher education had its great successes.) In the latter, the nationalist phase, there was a strong resistance to allowing the colonial state to intervene in matters affecting the 'national' culture. The need for change was still admitted: what was required, however, was a 'modern' nationalist culture which was not Western.

The essential components of this 'spiritual' domain were language, schools and family. In the case of language, Chatterjee admits that the East India Company and in particular the European missionaries played a crucial role in the emergence of, for example, the Bengali language; also in the first half of the nineteenth century the English language began to dominate as the language of bureaucracy and became 'the most powerful vehicle of intellectual influence on a new Bengali elite'. However, the crucial movement (according to Chatterjee) in the development of the modern Bengali language came in mid-century when the bilingual elite made it a cultural project to provide its mother tongue with the necessary linguistic equipment to enable it to become an adequate language for 'modern' culture. A network of presses, publishing houses, newspapers, magazines, and literary societies grew up

outside the purview of the state and the European missionaries. The native language belonged to the inner domain of cultural identity and this was a national claim. Similarly, the institution of secondary education provided the space where the new language could operate and spread. Again this was outside of the domain of the state (and the missionaries). Thirdly, the nationalists were not prepared to allow the colonial state to legislate the reform of the 'traditional' society in such areas as the family. Indeed the claim was that India needed a family life which was distinctively different from the 'Western' family. The new woman was to be 'modern' but not 'Western'.²⁰ What this meant was that the family was protected from the interference of the political domain. Indeed nationalism resisted, in a quite fundamental way, 'the sway of modern institutions of disciplinary power' and that included schooling.²¹

The outer and inner (described above) sounds like the public/private split. But it was not the same. A nationalist government could hardly say (as the public/private split might suggest) that matters of language, religion, caste, or class were no part of public policy. But this has created a serious tension. By surrendering to the old forms of the modern state, which said precisely that, modern India does not have a suitable vehicle for processing its newly imagined forms of community.

If Partha Chatterjee's claim is correct that nationalism reserved for itself the spiritual realm which was essential to cultural identity, then this explains, at least in part, some of the key failures of missionary education. It explains precisely why there were so few conversions, why the teaching of the schools about Christianity

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.7-9.

²¹ *ibid.*, p.75.

failed to penetrate the homes of the students ('the home is mightier than the school' principle) and also why the nationalist movement was seen as both anti-missionary and also anti-government even when the government deemed itself to have a cultural mission and much that they and the missionaries had on offer appeared superficially attractive to Indians who aspired to the 'modern' sector.

These strictures against missionary education, however, apply largely to the elitist education associated with Duff and his successors, but not to all missionary education. Carey and the other early missionaries at Serampore, the missionaries sent out by Bishop's College into the villages, and the CMS and SPG missionaries in South India, all fit into another educational pattern. The nationalist movement in Bengal, and in Tamilnadu, did, in fact, owe a good deal to the work of the missionaries, despite Chatterjee's rather dismissive attitude to missionary education. The missionaries mentioned, and many others like them, provided education which was village based and in the vernacular media and which aimed at a much desired social transformation for those who had previously been neglected by society. It aimed primarily at what missionaries today call 'church-planting' and was not overly concerned with spreading an alien culture. It was relatively successful in its own terms and it was often far away from the ideals of government education.

What was the effect of *government* education and its role in creating and sustaining independent India? Paul Brass has pointed out that the early nationalist leaders believed wholeheartedly in democracy and parliamentarianism. They wanted the British out, but were prepared to adopt their institutions. Advocates of the development of a set of political institutions and practices derived from Indian

traditions were notable for their absence in the Constituent Assembly, where Gandhian ideas of non-party government, decentralisation of power and authority, and the adoption of village self-government hardly challenged the predominant consensus.²² One might add that this mirrored the situation in the church where Western models were followed rather than indigenous ones. Also in the education system where an English speaking Westernised Indian elite preferred Western models. Had the education system given more weight to vernacular education and to the village context, then Gandhian solutions might have seemed more appropriate.

Thus Brass is right when he says that Indian politics have lacked the ideological underpinnings of European political traditions.²³ In a real sense this has divorced the form of politics from reality. Brass goes on to demonstrate that despite the Western forms of political life there are underlying assumptions and structures that are Indian. It would have been healthier to have recognised this from the start. The political institutions as adopted at Independence were not sufficiently culturally attuned to succeed. The English educated elite were responsible for making this mistake and they made it because of a badly conceived education system. In this the Duffite missionaries must carry some of the blame. This brings us back to Partha Chatterjee's point that modern India does not have a suitable vehicle for processing its newly imagined forms of community.

²² Paul Brass, The Politics of India Since Independence Second edition (Cambridge, 1994) p.11.

²³ *ibid.*, p.19.

The purposes of missionary education

Having made due allowances for the 'ideologies of the Raj' it is still necessary to isolate the distinctive approaches of the missionary educational enterprise. As suggested above,²⁴ it is facile to confuse missionary ideology (as if that were, in any case, a unity) with that of the Raj. There were, of course, links, but the question still remains: why did the missionaries invest so largely in education and how did they think that this investment furthered their aims?

There is no doubt that virtually all of the missionary societies that worked in India set up educational institutions.²⁵ In some cases they designated their servants 'educational missionaries' quite specifically. Even when a missionary was primarily an evangelist or church planter, he was often the school superintendent or his wife was involved in primary school work. Why then this preoccupation with education as a missionary method? How was it justified in terms of the overall missionary strategy? W.J.Emslie, writing in 1873, asked the question: 'Is there no other key but that of Education with which to open the door to the inner social life of India?' He suggested that there was: female medical missions. But this is an interesting testimony to the fact that mission thinkers believed that education was such a door, and that up to that point in the history of mission in India, the only door.²⁶

²⁴ p.433.

²⁵ I have not come across one missionary society that did not. The method seems to have been universal.

²⁶ Cited in R.Fitzgerald, "A Peculiar and Exceptional Measure": The Call for Women Medical Missionaries for India in the Later Nineteenth Century', in R.Bickers and R. Seton eds., Missionary Encounters, Sources and Issues (London, 1996) pp. 182-3.

It is of course possible that in some instances the missionaries had no very clear idea about such matters as 'missionary strategy'. They may have been simply responding to a perceived need, or to some vague philanthropic belief that 'education is a good thing' or even, in the case of wives, occupying their time, in the way that Victorian women did, when they were not responsible for the day to day work of their household. This is an argument from silence, of course. People who do not have strategies do not usually say so in so many words. But it is worth reflecting that many of the theories about missionary education may have come as a response to practical situations rather than the reverse.²⁷ Theories, for example, about English and vernacular education seem to have been as much guided by events as shaping them. As Indian students themselves demanded 'English-medium' education, the schools and colleges fell into line. Other more complex questions, such as the relationship between religious education and secular education, and what the definition of each of these was, only fully entered the debate when there was a substantial provision of government education and missionaries schools were losing their monopoly.

Whether arising out of the action, or the result of long and mature reflection, the issue at the heart of the debate - and certainly one which was still being enthusiastically discussed a hundred years after the first schools had been founded - was the simple

²⁷ Of course both may have been true: some theories were put into practice and some practices produced new theories. Brian Holmes puts it this way: 'There really were missionary educational policies which can be stated and examined. Each missionary society debated anxiously why missionaries should be sent and what aims should guide their work. Quite often, detailed instructions were given, for instance about the importance to be given to the task of converting non-Christians. The societies did not always agree in such matters as the content of the school curriculum, language policy, selective or universal education. But none of these differences were, in the last instance, as decisive regarding what was done as were the circumstances under which the missionaries worked in the field.' (B.Holmes, editor, Educational Policy and the Mission School: Case Studies from the British Empire) (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1968) p. viii.

question: what was the purpose of Christian education?

The native agency

'Raising up a native agency' may have been where it all began and where it all ended. Very early on the missionaries realised that the conversion of India would have to be achieved by 'native agents', if it were to be done at all. Their idea was to use schools and colleges as training institutions which would produce an educated Indian apostolate. Yet this simple aim tended to overlook the complexities of the situation. First of all, a training college must have someone to train. If there were no Indian Christians (as yet) then there would be no candidates for training. This was the great problem faced by Bishop's College in Calcutta.²⁸ It had a very clear idea that its purpose was to produce Indian missionaries. It had the facilities, and the money and the staff. What it did not have was students. Successive principals bemoaned the fact that numbers of students were so small. Even when there was a growing number of Christian converts, many of them did not necessarily want to go into the Christian ministry.²⁹

Conversions

For this reason the initial chief rival to the idea of raising up a local missionary force was the concept of the school as an evangelistic agency. For the many village schools

²⁸ See chapter 5.

²⁹ See, for example p.336 and p.124. The rule applied to both rich and poor. The rich expected to get government jobs and the poor went off to work in the coffee plantations.

that sprung up in the early years of the century, for Duff's Institution in Calcutta a little later, and for the missionary public in the home countries, schools meant converts.³⁰ Of course, many missionaries hoped that the two processes would go hand in hand, that children and young people would enter the schools and colleges as non-Christians but pass out of them as trained Christian missionaries ready to convert their own folk. This sort of hope was never really abandoned. If it was modified it was in the direction of the possibility of raising the whole level of educational standards amongst Christian communities and thereby providing an educated mass out of which Christian leaders would emerge (including no doubt evangelists and local 'missionaries'). Village schools were expected to produce a proportion of scholars for secondary and further education, who would then go back to the villages as schoolteachers and catechists, so perpetuating the system.³¹ The missionaries understood very well that some sort of educational cycle was necessary if the Indian church was ever to stand entirely on its own feet. There was never any intention to keep village Christians, for example, at an elementary level, just because they were village people. It was supposed throughout the missionary enterprise that education would be a means of 'raising' Christians. In order to do this there must be at least the possibility of their going on to Higher Education. Right from the beginning, as demonstrated by the arrangements made at Serampore, through to the end of our period, there was this revolutionary hope that Indian Christians, however humble their origin, would be able to compete, intellectually and in other ways, with their compatriots from the highest social strata. One of the reasons given for the

³⁰ There were plenty of missionaries at the World Mission Conference in 1910 who were still ready to claim that this was the main purpose of schools and colleges. See, for example, p. 411.

³¹ Chapter 7 describes this process in a number of contexts. See, for example, p.270.

establishment of a Women's College when other aspects of women's education were still embryonic, was that without it the 'circuit' was incomplete, as far as female education was concerned. Female teachers would need to be trained at a female College in order to staff female village schools.³² In general we can say that as the century progressed, more missions took seriously their responsibility to educate their flock. Where there were numerous conversions - particularly after the mass movements - this was particularly so.

With regard to conversions, the big question was not whether schools and colleges should have an evangelistic aim but whether they were effective in achieving it. In terms of converts who could be named and counted the answer was often discouragingly negative. Certainly in higher class education before long the stream (it was never a flood) of converts associated with the heroic age of Duff and his contemporaries, became a trickle and then dried up altogether.³³ Neo-Hindu movements assimilated and then provided an alternative to Christian values; militant scientific secularism (in many cases a virus imported unknowingly by the missionaries themselves) became more common, and towards the end of the century militant nationalism offered yet another rival to Christianity. Would it be better then to concentrate on traditional methods such as preaching and literature evangelism? Opinions on this varied. A common argument was that schools and colleges created the best opportunities for 'reaching' certain sections of the population (mainly caste Hindus). Because of the desire for education the 'upper classes' flocked to mission educational institutions; otherwise they would scarcely have had anything to do with missionaries at all. The debate about conversions in schools was heavily, perhaps

³² See p. 280.

³³ See p.427 for the discouraging findings of the Lindsay Commission.

unhealthily, influenced by the almost legendary successes of the Church of Scotland missionaries, Alexander Duff and John Wilson, particularly the former. The fact of their success - and by the measure of later missionaries they were very successful - was used as a reference point again and again in the debate. Duff had converts in Calcutta, Wilson in Bombay. It was a method that worked, so the argument went, and should be persevered with.

But what was the method? Duff, Wilson, and many others, expected a number of their students, at some time during their education, to renounce their Hinduism, or other non-Christian faith, and to become baptised Christians. Others - William Miller of Madras Christian College is an example - did not feel it appropriate to aim at conversions in the classroom, but still expected that the indirect influence of Christian education would in the end produce Christians. A number of reasons have been suggested for these different approaches. One was that Miller and his contemporaries may simply have been rationalising the failure to see classroom converts. Another was that Miller was reflecting a change in the theological climate.³⁴ The idea of conversion as a decisive, confrontational event became, to some missionaries, more problematic. Kenneth Cracknell has demonstrated recently that a number of leading missionaries in the post-Duff era were moving towards ideas of fulfilment and dialogue which posited a less confrontational view of mission. All belong to the end of the nineteenth and the twentieth century. They and others like them created a climate in which the need to gain conversions seemed less urgent.³⁵

³⁴ I have attempted to describe this climate in chapter 8.

³⁵ See K. Cracknell, Justice, Courtesy and Love (London, 1995) *passim*.

Or it may have simply been a matter of context. On the whole the missions which worked amongst the wealthy and educated were attracted by the gradualism of fulfilment theories. Those that ran village schools, or primary schools in city areas, expected to see conversions and did in fact do so. Theory perhaps followed practice. Working among the village schools of Tirunelveli (Tinnevely) District, Bishop Caldwell speaks about the aim of the schools as primarily the obtaining of conversions.³⁶ By contrast, not long after this, in 1872, William Miller was expounding a thorough going *preparatio evangelica* approach to an approving audience at the first all-India missionary Conference,³⁷ to whom he was happy to say that conversions should not be the main aim of a school or college. Yet Caldwell and Miller were talking about different constituencies. The former ministered in rural Tamil Nadu, the latter in urban Madras. Caldwell spoke of village schools, Miller of Higher Education amongst the educated elite. To revert briefly to the issue of raising up a native agency, the educational context may have been a decisive factor in determining that issue also. Those already engaged in Higher Education and schools for non-Christians (say the Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi) could find convincing arguments for continuing to do so. Those who were inundated by converts could easily see why their main thrust should be educating Christians. There was perhaps some variation on a denominational basis also. A.G.Street's plea³⁸ that the children of Christians should be educated as against non-Christians probably had something to do with his high church sympathies. He felt that the children of Christians were already incorporated into the church through baptism, and were therefore a special responsibility. His evangelical colleagues in Calcutta wanted schools to have a more evangelistic

³⁶ See above p.268 n.11.

³⁷ See above p. 314.

³⁸ See above p.166.

approach. Yet overall, context was more important than denominational loyalty.³⁹

One other factor must be taken into account. In the main the British supporters of Indian mission saw 'the conversion of the heathen' as they usually called it, as the missionaries' primary task. Mission leaders, whether on the field or in the home country, needed to be aware of this. The long running debate as to whether the men and women who gave themselves entirely to educational work, were really missionaries, was an indication of this concern. The dispute between the Serampore missionaries and the BMS had partly to do with the College offering a general education which, according to its critics, had lost its evangelistic cutting edge.⁴⁰ The Madras Committee of the SPG was quick to censure any of its members who neglected their missionary duties, as they defined them, in favour of education.⁴¹ In each case it seems that officers of the missionary societies wished to emphasise the task of the missionary as first and foremost converting non-Christians and building up the church. If schools and colleges were seen to be contributing directly to this end, well and good, but as this became a more indirect aim, the home constituency became more anxious. Similarly, Indian Christians saw missionary schools as mainly in place to provide educational opportunities for themselves and their children. They often had support in this from the missionaries.⁴² There was not nearly such clear cut support from the home countries, who often saw schools for Christians as an unwelcome alternative to schools for the non-Christians because it was in the latter that

³⁹ See p.422.

⁴⁰ See above p.125.

⁴¹ See p.203.

⁴² See the testimony of Goolzar Shah and his missionary supporters, p.117-8.

conversions would or might take place.

Diffusion

The failure to obtain conversions might have been expected to lead to the closing down of Christian schools and colleges and the diversion of resources into other enterprises. This did not happen. The missionaries found reasons for going on with the work even in schools and colleges where there were no converts. In the second half of the nineteenth century they gradually developed a 'diffusion' theory. The idea was that the influence of Christianity amongst the non-Christian population was being spread through Christian education, and that was enough. In due course, like the leaven in the loaf, the whole would be permeated by this secret and powerful influence. As the influence was hidden and the effects were long-term it was difficult to refute this theory, and it became increasingly influential, linked as it was with changing attitudes towards Indian religions and their relationship to the gospel. The diffusion theory came in two versions. Firstly, it was held to be a process which was a necessary preparation for the gospel, an undermining of the Indian (especially the Hindu) world view. This was the view of William Miller, mentioned above. Secondly, it was a more general spread of Christian 'standards', a civilising process that would bring in the Kingdom of God by stealth, and to that extent sufficient of itself.⁴³ Indeed it is clear that amongst many missionaries education had now become an end in itself. It was a good thing to offer - as a sort of social duty, and it provided people with 'social uplift' or if they were already amongst the privileged classes, with a better life. That would certainly not have been a sufficient reason for starting schools and colleges in the thinking of the early educational missionaries. Now this general purpose was shaping

⁴³ 'Diffusion' is the main topic of chapters 8 and 9.

not just the thinking of those in education but mission thinkers generally.

The idea of the diffusion of Christian knowledge as an end in itself (and as a preparation for the gospel), once it took hold, was popular throughout the educational system. The village schools were seen as civilising a 'backward' populace, and secondary and higher education continued the work of providing moral standards, feeding hungry minds, introducing useful ideas, and in general promoting the cause of Christian civilisation. As we have noted, it was probably most popular amongst serving missionaries who were working in schools and colleges where the flow of conversions had significantly slowed down or even ceased. There does not seem to have been a great difference in approach on this issue between missions. The inter-mission Conference at Allahabad in 1872 which heard William Miller defend the 'diffusion' approach was unanimously supportive of him, though subsequent speakers wished to stress that diffusion was not the only possible educational aim.

Social uplift

The fourth possible aim for Christian education - social uplift for the culturally and economically deprived - appeared from time to time in the missionary literature but often as a hoped-for or perceived side-effect of other more specifically Christian aims.⁴⁴ Thus, raising the native agency which would ultimately take over from the missionaries and do the job of converting India, was also something which contributed to the material welfare of Indian Christians. A better educated church would enjoy a higher standard of living. Again, the general diffusion of Christian knowledge, whether

⁴⁴ I have attempted to deal with the complex issues surrounding the conversion of social groups and their 'uplift' in chapter 7.

thought of specifically as *preparatio evangelica* or not, was often believed to be a civilising process, where civilisation could mean among other benefits, a process of social amelioration. Thus the destruction of the caste system, something which it was hoped would happen as a result of Christian education, clearly ought to benefit those who were disadvantaged by it socially and materially.

The arguments for 'social uplift', like the other theories of educational purpose, were influenced by particular contexts. They were heard more clearly by those who worked amongst the poor in villages and slums, and were naturally less popular in missions such as the Cambridge Brotherhood who were concentrating mainly on the Indian elite. They were especially popular among Indian Christians, particularly after the mass movements, because most of them were socially disadvantaged at the time of their conversion; education targeted to them might be a possible means of rising in the social scale as compared to their Hindu neighbours. While some, like William Miller, believed that this was a dangerous situation, in that equating conversion to Christianity with opportunities to rise in the social scale might lead to nominalism and syncretism, most missionaries were clearly happy to provide this advantage to their converts, whom they considered unfairly disadvantaged in the first place. In practice, social amelioration was a measurable and achievable product, which guaranteed the popularity of Christian institutions. Even those working amongst upper caste Indians had to reckon with the fact that the possibility of acquiring English as a working language meant greater employment opportunities with a consequent potential rise in living standards. Missionaries were not keen to admit that this might be a reason why Hindu parents chose their schools, but it was an important factor nevertheless. Mission supporters back in the home countries were even less keen to admit this state of affairs.

What many missionaries seemed almost to fail to notice (until quite well on in twentieth century) was that the Indian church was growing. There had indeed been converts, a few the product of educational work, but many not. More than ever converts needed educating and their children even more so. Even if this was not the primary goal of their ministry, many missionaries felt that they had a responsibility to their converts to provide them with a good education. Many of the converts agreed. There is no doubt that Indian Christians generally favoured the idea that the schools and colleges founded by the missionaries were for them. They valued the opportunities in life that a good education provided for them and pressed the missionaries to continue to offer Christian education for Christian people. Also this linked back into the original purpose of raising up a native agency. A well educated Christian community would presumably produce, and be able to sustain, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Indeed raising the educational level of the whole Christian community was essential if there was to be an indigenous, 'self-supporting' church. Of course the missionaries had to face the issue as to whether, having received a good education, these Christians felt inclined to put it at the service of the Church, particularly when a good education opened up opportunities for employment elsewhere. However, many did choose to become church leaders and many were willing to support them with their new found resources, and in this way, raising up a native agency, and providing 'social uplift' tended to fuse in the education of Christians.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ V.S.Azariah and his family are classic examples of men who used their new-found education in the service of the church. See above p. 271.

Conclusions

The first conclusion to which this study leads is that raising up an effective native agency, creating and empowering a well trained apostolate within a well educated Indian church was the initial aim of the missionary educators and was their ultimate achievement. It is part of that thesis that, ironically, this original purpose was achieved almost by default, after a long diversion. Ironical too, that the revered 'founding father' (though he was nothing of the sort) of Indian missionary education, Alexander Duff, should have been the effective cause of the diversion. The work of the Baptists and the SPG in Bengal, (chapters 4 and 5) according to this study, was on the right lines. Village schools and urban schools among the poorer classes, conducted in the vernacular languages, were an appropriate starting point (Chapter 7). The local schoolmaster could also be the local preacher, church planter and catechist. Churches having been planted, then a College for training 'the native agency' became a need, if the work was to be continued not by missionaries but by local Christians. This was the rationale behind Serampore College and Bishop's College. Of course, this would take some time. The business of planting 'vernacular' churches and then educating a leadership appropriate to their needs, would not happen overnight. Perhaps Serampore College and Bishop's College were a little ahead of their time. Perhaps they were too ambitious and grandiose, given the embryonic state of the indigenous church, and allowed themselves to become too 'Westernised'. Nevertheless the idea was right.

A second conclusion is that the reason for this long diversion was that too many resources were put into higher class education and not enough into nurturing the educational needs of the embryonic church amongst the poor. The apparent success of

Alexander Duff's work soon made him popular in Calcutta and not only among the missionaries. His Institution was crowded to the doors and became renowned for its educational excellence. Duff was also popular in Scotland, where much was made of his ability to win prestigious converts to the Christian faith, through his educational contacts. Yet in essence Duff's work was at variance with that of his fellow missionaries. It was 'top down' rather than 'bottom up'. This was thought by many to be a positive advantage. Capture the high ground - the intelligentsia, the representatives of the upper castes, the influential and well to do, and the future leaders of India had been won for the church. This was an argument that never went away. (Chapters 8 and 9) It can be found, for example, in the thinking of William Miller, almost a century later, and was at the centre of Miller's educational philosophy as expounded at the Edinburgh Conference in 1910. However, already by the end of the century and into the twentieth, doubts were beginning to rise because of the needs of the Church in India. These were beginning to be expressed by some of the correspondents who wrote to the same Edinburgh Conference. By the time of the Lindsay Commission in 1931 there was a widespread feeling that Christian colleges have not done enough for the Church in India. Significantly, the model that the Commission invoked was not that provided by Duff and Miller but the example of William Carey's Serampore. The 'English' model, so powerfully subverted by the Scots, was beginning to take over again. (Chapter 10)

In fact, despite its ongoing popularity, the policy of diffusion can clearly be seen to be a failure in terms of building a Christian presence in India, which, after all, was Duff's (and the missionaries') main purpose. Firstly, because Duff's educational strategy included a strong element of cultural imperialism. He believed that the culture of the

West, its science, literature and religion, would so commend itself to Indian young men that they would happily relinquish their Hindu/Indian worldview in favour of a Western/Christian one. In practice there were very few that did. Some became 'Westernised' in the sense that they became sceptical of their own Hindu religious heritage; others became Anglicised in some of their customs and habits (including their language), but they did not on the whole become Christians. Further the loyalties of most of Duff's pupils, and indeed most of the products of high-class missionary education, remained, not surprisingly, family centred rather than school or college centred. Any amount of schooling was not equal to the ties of family, clan and community, when and if the values of the two worldviews clashed. Duff and many of his contemporaries believed that all that was necessary to gain conversions was to change the way their students thought - a very Enlightenment approach! (Chapter 3)

What Duff may have overlooked was a simple psychology. The rich and the influential find it difficult to change, simply because they have a great deal to lose. Wealthy caste families might wish to take advantage of educational opportunities, but they could do this without joining the Christians who made a point of condemning the caste system and preaching equality in social relationships. By contrast church and school in the village setting frequently offered a pathway upwards out of social inferiority and economic deprivation.

Higher class education in India is still often associated with Christianity. St Stephen's College still exists in Delhi, so does the Madras Christian College in Madras and there is a Wilson College in Bombay, just to mention a handful of examples. Yet the evidence is that, in terms of missionary strategy it was the lower class, vernacular education which was the most effective educational tool, and which contributed most to the building of the Indian church.

Sources and Bibliography

Manuscript sources

The main archives consulted have been those of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, (both in Rhodes House, Oxford), the Baptist Missionary Society in the Angus Library, in Regent's Park College, Oxford and the Church Missionary Society in the library of the University of Birmingham. In each case I have included the catalogue listings of the archive in the footnotes. I have also consulted the Church Missionary Society pamphlet collection in the library of Partnership House in London and a list of those pamphlets consulted is given below. I have added brief notes on each archive below in order to indicate the way that it has been used and its usefulness to this particular study.

I have used the following notation, both for the archive and the mission itself.

United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel – USPG

Cambridge Mission to Delhi – CMD

Baptist Missionary Society – BMS

Church Missionary Society – CMS.

The USPG was previously the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and I have

abbreviated this to SPG.

USPG Archive

a. Bishop College and its schools

The archive contains letters from the Bishop's College Principal and staff to the SPG headquarters in London, and also some minutes of College Council meetings. There are also letters by staff to the Bishop of Calcutta and even from students to staff. The SPG missionaries doing school work outside of Calcutta wrote reports of their activities to the College, and these have been kept. There are also reports which were made by College staff when 'on tour'. They were responsible for the inspection of the schools. Professor Street's candid letters to Ernest Hawkins at the SPG are undoubtedly the 'star turn'.

b. South India

There are numerous letters from the SPG missionaries working in South India (mostly South Tamil Nadu), some to headquarters, but the majority to the secretary of the SPG Diocesan Committee at Madras. The secretary, in turn, wrote (at length) to the Mission in London. Almost all the missionaries were engaged in educational work. The Minutes of the Diocesan Committee are also available. Some correspondence is with those outside the Mission, for example with the Bishop and with Government, particularly the Schools' Inspectorate.

BMS Archive

The archive contains the letters of the Serampore Trio (also their successors John Mack and J.C.Marshman) to the BMS in London as well as annual reports to do with the work. Serampore College is naturally a focus of interest after 1818. There are also letters from Baptist missionaries not based on Serampore, such as Jabez Carey and the 'Calcutta Brethren' about their educational work. A number of useful pieces of more extensive, but still unpublished, writing, such as journals from Symes and Peacock and John Wenger's 'Reminiscences' are also available. A report from John Trafford usefully reviews the work from a post-pioneer standpoint.

CMS Archive

I have used the CMS archive primarily to look at the issue of Government funding after the Wood Despatch. Reports and letters from all over the country: Calcutta, Agra, Lahore, Amritsar, Delhi, Benares, Allahabad, Gorakhpur, Bangalore and Madras are available and testify to the extent to which this is a major issue. In addition to correspondence there are records of the various missionary conferences either sponsored by or attended by the CMS missionaries. The Madras records largely consist of letters to and from the Government attempting to clarify the workings of the grants-in-aid system. The missionaries are convinced that the Government is not adhering to stated policy and the CMS took the lead in protesting. The records of this are well preserved in the archive.

The CMS Pamphlet Collection (I have listed those that I have consulted below) provides evidence of the missionary reaction to the Indian Mutiny and the debate

over religious versus secular education, particularly the 'Bible in the classroom' issue. The pamphlets I have consulted are mostly printed versions of correspondence with the Government.

Cambridge Mission to Delhi Archive

This archive includes letters from the Cambridge missionaries who worked in Delhi (the Mission was founded in 1877) about their educational work at St Stephen's College and school. The archive also contains the annual reports sent to headquarters and published in Cambridge. The Mission published 'Occasional Papers' and I have listed those that I have consulted below. They cover a number of subjects but educational issues naturally predominate. There is a certain amount of 'internal' correspondence, particularly as one of the early leaders of the Mission, Lefroy, moved from Delhi when he became Bishop of the Punjab. Some of the Cambridge missionaries worked outside of Delhi, though not many, and there are letters from them to Cambridge. Despite the relatively narrow focus of the archive – St. Stephen's and Delhi – the missionaries were university men who wrote at length about 'issues' as well as their day to day experience.

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